1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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439 Dongar, sleeping the first night at Orcha, twenty-five miles from
484 Kurmer, descending in the morning fourteen miles to Dhaurai, doing their selling and buying and eating a noon meal, and then return that afternoon to sleep again at Orcha, reaching Kurmer on the third day by noon. And their route is no easy one, but up hill
[483] and down dale along rough mountain paths. The men will carry heavy loads balanced at either end of a carrying stick borne on their shoulder, proceeding at a jog trot, for nine or ten miles over similar paths, but stop to drink and paddle at the streams, and get very exhausted if they have to carry weights much farther; on the other hand, after food and an hour's rest they are ready to
481 walk back at once to their villages. Three Hill Marias on my last visit to the hills came to my camp at Itulnar some seventy miles across country, with letters, and met me on the march at 8 a.m. in the hills on the third morning after they had set out, having done twelve miles that morning along an exceptionally arduous mountain
● 241 path. When the crops are ripe on the *penda* slopes and the men are sleeping there, the women go twice a day to them with their food, and sometimes have a heavy day's reaping as well; the *penda* may be five or six miles away from the village and high above it.

481 Like the Nagas of the Assam hills, the Hill Marias prefer walking over hilly country to long treks on the plains, and are excellent hill and tree climbers. All the Koitor of Bastar, in fact, are remarkably agile tree climbers, and seem to walk up trees rather than climb.

147 The Bison-horn Maria is even better developed physically than the Hill Maria, and has similar powers of endurance, though on
536 the level plateau villages he does not become the adept hill climber that every Hill Maria is. He leaves less, however, to his women. He can be seen at his physical fittest when dancing for hours with tireless verve and agility, wearing on his head a heavy head-dress of bison-horns with plumes of peacock and jungle-cock feathers and strings of cowries, with a heavy cylindrical drum of hollowed tree-trunk three feet or more long slung from his shoulders, and sometimes carrying a small son frogwise on his chest. He will carry
482 stick-loads of grain sixty or seventy miles to market in the Godavari
492 valley, for even he makes as yet only little use of carts or beasts of burden; the Hill Maria makes none at all.

291 The Hill Maria wears nothing but a loin-cloth of coarse cotton
147 in winter, summer and rains, though an occasional man may have a piece of similar cloth big enough to wrap over his shoulders at night, and a few headmen have blankets. His body, therefore, is inured to heat and to great cold; for frosts are frequent in his hills,
[132] and even as late as the end of March the thermometer may fall to 42°.

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The chief agricultural implement of the Hill Marias, with which he hacks up the surface of his *penda* slopes and his occasional patches of permanent cultivation, is his *gudari*, known to the Bison-horn Marias as *hargudar*, and in the Halbi language as *bhalu korhi* or 'bear hoe'. This, like the *maq'su* axe, is an iron blade in form suggestive of a long stone celt. It is in form very like the *maq'su* axe, but the socket is reversed so that the long handle is fixed in the same way as the handle of an adze, at an angle of about 80° to the blade when laid flat on the ground. The blade is rather bigger than that of

Hoes (see Figure 4)

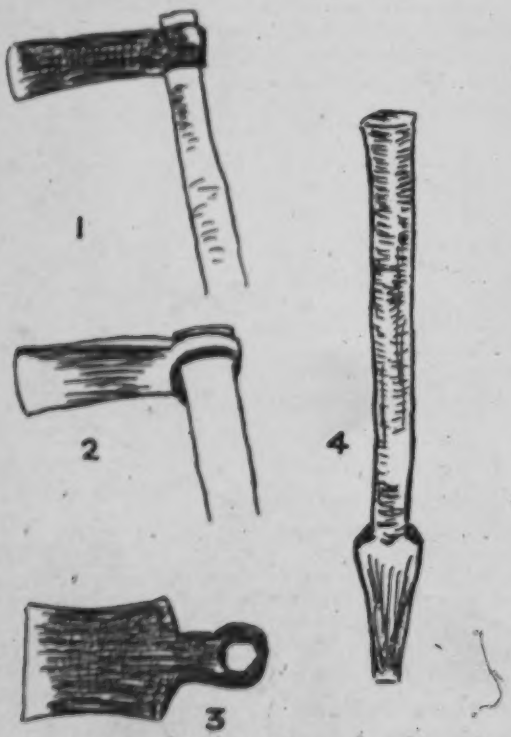

FIGURE 4.
1. Hill Maria axe (maq'su).
2. Hill Maria hoe (gudari).
3. Bison-horn hoe (korki).
4. Hill Maria digging iron (pulu).

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241 the ordinary axe, and there is little or no 'waist' by the socket. It is, on a smaller scale, like the Cornish biddox.

Though this is used by some Bison-horn Marias in the remoter tracts, its use is now definitely a sign of the Hill Maria. The Bison-horn Maria uses the ordinary *korki* of the plains, which the Hill Maria calls *koq-gudari*; the villages on the edge of the Abujhmar hills are beginning to use it instead of the *gudari*, but it is never seen in the villages in the interior of the hills. This is a shouldered iron hoe, the blade from the shoulders to the digging edge being almost square, the sides being only slightly longer than the edge. It scores over the *gudari* because it can also be used to scoop and shovel earth.

Last must be mentioned the solid iron crowbar or digging-stick, found in all Maria houses, and throughout Bastar. But in the [171] Abujhmar hills it is interesting to find that it is sometimes shouldered and is in form very like the Madras Sawaras' shouldered iron hoe illustrated at p. 361 of Hutton's *India Census Report* (1931). This is known to the Hill Marias as *pulu*. I have seen similar shouldered specimens occasionally among the Bison-horn Marias, and was told that they had been imported from the Malkangiri taluq of the Jeypore Agency; but there is no coming and going between that [435] Agency and the Abujhmar hills. Of all the Marias' iron weapons and implements the *pulu* is the dearest, owing to the weight of iron used. The blacksmiths charge a rupee, the price of three *gudari* or two axes. It is generally about a metre long, and the shouldered portion is about a quarter of the total length. Plain unshouldered specimens are more common. Its chief use is for digging up the various yams and jungle roots in the rains that form so important a part of the diet of all Bastar Koitor. Or it is useful for digging holes for the posts of houses, or grubbing up stumps, etc.; it never is used as a hoe.

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This traditional arrangement of the Hill Maria villages is far from being always observed. I have seen a village constructed in this way on one of its traditional sites (*pagh* or *pagha'i*; Murias say *pare*, while Bison-horn Marias generally use the Halbi word *padar*), and then four years later found it reconstructed on one of the alternative sites with little sign of the traditional grouping; and I have also seen the converse occur. In fact, the configuration of the site may make the traditional arrangement difficult. It is also being gradually abandoned in the villages on the edges of the hills into which the individualism of surrounding plains villages is creeping, and in the few villages such as Orcha and Hikul which have good permanent rice cultivation; in the latter villages there is a growing tendency not to shift the sites when the surrounding *ponda* slopes are exhausted, but to cultivate even remote slopes from the village site in the vicinity of the permanent rice fields. As the old feeling of village community weakens, houses are no longer built as long-houses, each containing groups of three or four houses occupied by brothers or near paternal cousins, but are built detached, each with its own granary close to it, instead of the householder having one compartment in the long granary row; even then, however, the detached houses tend to group themselves roughly into lines flanking a central open space, at one end of which is the village dormitory (*gotul-lon*), in its usual position. Even when a village site is becoming permanent, as at Orcha and Hikul, any sudden calamity, such as crop failure, epidemic or epizootic, will probably induce the villagers to shift. In several villages the *kasyeq-gaita* always keeps a hen sitting on eggs inside his house, and the addling of an undue proportion of these is frequently a signal for the shifting of the village; but a wise *gaita* does not let his eggs get addled unless there is really sound economic or religious reason for shifting, when the omens can be made to suit the occasion.

Behind each line of houses will be found rows of pig-sties, at least one for each house; and the pigs often seem better housed than their masters. Where, as around Orcha, sal (*Shorea robusta*) or other timber is plentiful, the pig-sties are generally made of sections of tree trunk or large boughs laid horizontally between vertical stays, with an opening in front which can be closed by dropping vertical posts over it between horizontal stays at the top and bottom of the opening. These sties are sheltered from the sun by grass-thatched roofs sloping back from two or more vertical posts about 6 feet high to similar posts about 4 feet high in the rear. Dug-out troughs of sal wood are kept outside or just inside the sties for water and food for the pigs; the commonest food is a mash made from the chaff or husks of *kosra* (*kutki*; *Panicum miliaceum*) and

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and every Maria house was occupied by members of the Parllo clan, the only partial exception being the empty house (no. 1-a) which had till recently been occupied by a youth of the Deda clan, which may intermarry with the Parllo clan, serving as *lamana'i* to win the niece of Parllo Murra, occupant of house no. 1-d. It will be observed that some long-houses have a joint menstruation hut at the rear of the house, while in some there is a separate *kala* for each house in the long-house. The *karyap-gaita's* house is at the dormitory end of the street, a very usual position.

The shifting of villages

It has already been implied that though a village site may be abandoned for superstitious reasons, the predominant reason is economic, the exhaustion of the *penda* slopes that can be conveniently cultivated from the existing village. If three or more *kaghai* (*penda* sites) can be dealt with from one *paghai* or village site, then the village may remain on that site for seven or eight years, even though there are other *paghai* in the other *penda* sites cultivated from it; or if any portion of the last *penda* site to be cultivated is very remote from it, then a few houses may be shifted there. What makes the old topographical survey maps so useless for finding a modern village is that they mark only the village site occupied in the sixties, generally, too, by the particular name of that site, not by the general name of the village. The big village of Orcha, for example, is not marked as such, but by the name of its *paghai* Hoinar. A reference to the sketch map of the parish (to use a term more suitable than 'village') of Handawada in Dantewara Mar (opposite p. 108) will make the position clear. The parish has ten alternative *kaghai* cultivation sites, viz.:—

1. Kawar *kaghai*, 1st half.
2. Ditto, 2nd half.
3. Irapmeta *kaghai*.
4. Hotangpal *kaghai*.
5. Kurmelnar *kaghai*.
6. Rekarai *kaghai*.
7. Handawada *kaghai*, 1st half.
8. Ditto, 2nd half.
9. Ahekole *kaghai*, 1st half.
10. Ditto, 2nd half.

Of these, nos. 1, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9 only contained *paghai* village sites. In February 1930 the main village was still settled in no. 9, but the *penda* slopes in nos. 9 and 10 had been exhausted, and those in no. 1 had been partly cultivated for the first year and were being reaped. Nos. 9 and 10 had lasted for six years and, though the villagers had started to cultivate no. 1 a long way below the village site in no. 9 and on the other side of the Goinder river, they were only then at harvest time starting to shift the village to the *paghai* in no. 2; in fact, the labour of the first year's work of clearing and cultivating a fresh *penda* slope is so heavy that the shifting of the village itself is, when necessitated by the distance of the existing site

[text continues on p. 109]

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Key to Figure 6

Kaghai Names (see p. 107).

1. Kawar, 1st half.
2. Do., 2nd half.
3. Irapmeta.
4. Hitangpal
5. Kurmalnar.
6. Rekarai.
7. Handawada, 1st half.
8. Do., 2nd half.
9. Ahekele, 1st half.
10. Do., 2nd half.

The letters against fields in nos. 2 and 3 and houses and granaries in nos. 1, 3, 9 and 10 refer to the tenants in the list below. Tenants A to N are Gume by clan, O to Q, Tamo.

(*Abbreviations.*—M = mother, W = wife, S = grown-up son, b = boy child, g = girl child, D = marriageable daughter.)

Letter	*Tenant*	*Family*	*Area in acres*	*Rent* Rs. a.
A	Modi s/o Malla	M., cousin's widow	5·00	2 4
B	Lalu s/o Banda, Bhum-gaita	W., 1 b.	4·50	1 12
C	Banda s/o Bursai	W., 2 g.	6·25	3 8
D	Horra s/o Musra	W., 1 g.	3·50	2 4
E	Masa s/o Kulo-gaita	W., 1 S., 1 g.	7·50	4 12
F	Pido s/o Doga	W., 1 b.	3·50	2 0
G	Irpa s/o Karanje	W.	1·50	1 8
H	Rama s/o Peda Junga s/o Rama	W., 1 S., 2 g.	4·50	2 4 1 8
I	Kohla s/o Pahandi	W., 1 D., 1 man serving to win daughter's hand	4·00	1 8
J	Doga s/o Wijja	W., 2 b., 1 g.	4·00	1 12
K	Kuma s/o Boda	W., 1 g.	4·50	1 4
L	Juga s/o Wijja	M.	1·50	2 0
M	Malla s/o Gorra, Kasyeq-gaita	W., 1 S., 1 b., 1 g.	5·50	2 4
N	Pahandi s/o Karanje	W., M.	2·50	2 12
O	Hara s/o Pandu	W.	3·00	2 4
P	Bandi s/o Kuli	W., M., 2 b.	5·00	2 12
Q	Musra s/o Pandu	W.	2·25	2 4
		Total Acres	68·50	Rs. 40 12

There was also in Ahekele Kaghai no. 9 a house shared by a Rawat and a Telugu with a small tobacco plot paying 4 annas rent 4

Rs. 41 0

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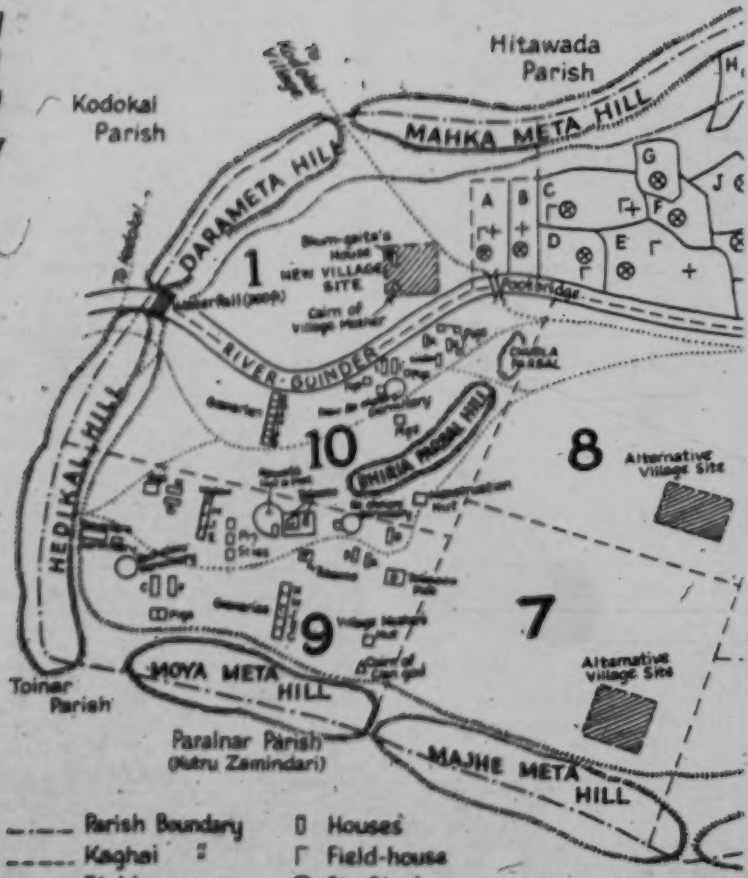

Parish Boundary
Kaghai
Field
Footpaths
Houses
Field-house
Big Shed
Small Shed

The buildings etc. in Kaghai Nos 9 & 10 are of course drawn too large in comparison to the areas of the Fields in Nos 2 & 3; actually they left ample room for Fields in Nos 9 & 10, but had become more scattered when those Fields became exhausted

FIGURE 6
PARISH MAP OF HANDAWADA

[p. 108(A)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949 ·
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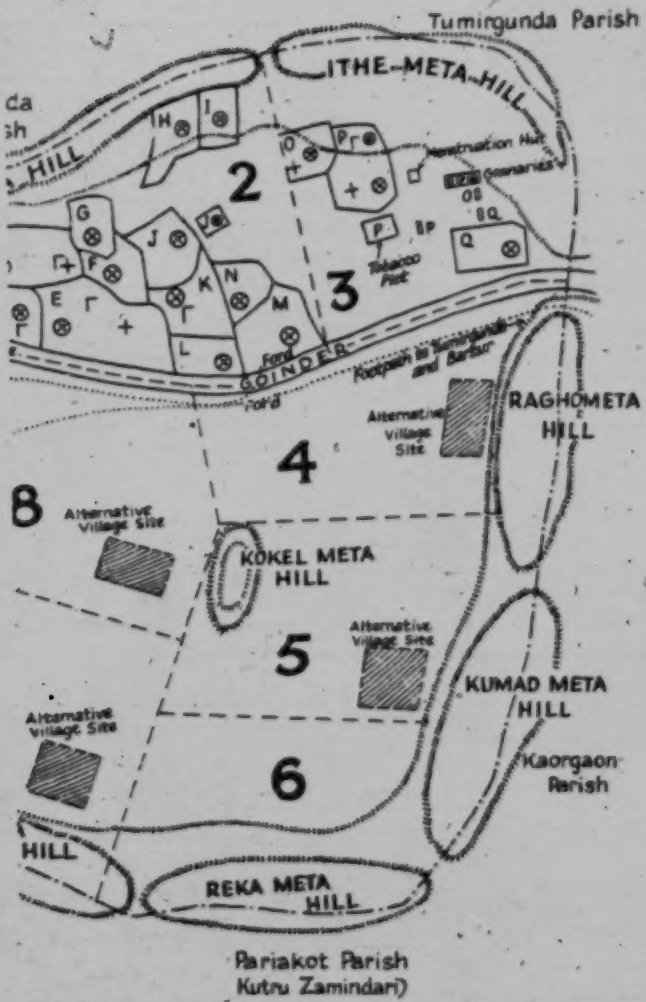

OF HANDAWADA

[p. 108(B)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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from the fresh cultivation site, postponed till after the first harvest has been raised on the latter. This is inconvenient only to the women, as from the time when the new *kosra* comes into ear till the harvest is over all the men sleep apart from their wives in their fields, while their womenfolk have to sleep in the village, it being taboo for women to sleep in the fields and to have sexual intercourse during this period. As it was inconvenient for the bachelors to sleep in the dormitory (*gotul-lon*) on the hill-top village in Ahekele *paghai*, a temporary dormitory had been made near the river, actually in Ahekele *kaghai* no. 10, but close to the bridge by which the villagers crossed the river to their *penda* fields in Kawar *kaghai*; and there were also four houses there, and a row of granaries, that site having been more convenient for some of the villagers whose fields had been on the lower slopes of *kaghai* no. 10 when that was being cultivated. Handawada is a village of the Gume clan; and all the houses in the village on Ahekele *paghai*, those by the river in *kaghai* no. 10, and the one advance-guard house in Kawar *paghai*, as well as all the *penda* fields in Kawar *kaghai* no. 1, belonged to members of the Gume clan: but in the small Irpmeta *kaghai* no. 3 three families of the Tamo clan, with which the Gume clan may intermarry, had been allowed to have *penda* cultivation and to build houses and granaries; the wives had all been Gume girls. In the new village site, Kawar *paghai*, one villager had already built his house, to which I referred above as the advance-guard house, because he had been sent to make an experimental *penda* field in Kawar *kaghai* no. 1 a year in advance of the rest of the villagers, in accordance with custom; on the success of this experimental cultivation depends the villagers' decision whether to migrate *en masse* in the following year. There was also a newly made cairn close by where a ceremony in honour of the Village Mother had been performed as an essential preliminary to the shifting of the village. When I next camped in the parish in March 1934, the villagers had for three years occupied Kawar *paghai*, and the houses were dirty and smoke-blackened; the villagers had found the site feverish and unhealthy owing to its proximity to the river, there had been several deaths, and Kawar *kaghai* nos. 1 and 2 had each been exhausted in two years. Their Tamo relatives had exhausted Irpmeta *kaghai* and left the parish. The *Bhum-gaita* and another villager had been sent ahead to make experimental *penda* plots in Hitangpal *kaghai* (no. 4), and the villagers proposed to shift the village during 1935 to the village site in that *kaghai* or the adjacent Kurmelnar *kaghai* (no. 5); the experiments in Hitangpal had succeeded, and the villagers were to start their *penda* felling in a few days.

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361 The population is comparatively small, and the land available for
[423] the shifting *penda* cultivation is very extensive. There is practically no individual property in *penda* land, and it is recognized only in permanent rice fields.

361 In comparison, the Bison-horn Maria country is thickly
● 241 populated; there is far more permanent rice cultivation; much old *penda* land has lost its forest growth, or is getting steadily
178 slower in recuperating it after each time when it is felled and burnt
621 for *penda* cultivation; and each villager likes to have a large *bari* or garden enclosure at the back of his house or in the immediate neighbourhood of the village where he can grow tobacco, maize, chillies, tomatoes and sesamum, and can pen his cattle for the sake of their manure. In consequence, economic considerations now operate in favour of the permanency of Bison-horn Maria villages and against their being shifted; as the pressure on the land has become greater the alternative sites (*padar*), to which in past generations a village was from time to time shifted, have been permanently occupied by hamlets (*para*) of that village, and the settlers in the hamlets have permanently occupied the adjacent *penda* sites once cultivated in rotation by the shifting village. Many big Bison-horn villages have six or seven hamlets, some of which are virtually separate villages, and are beginning to assert a separate identity by having their own headmen and sometimes their own village priests, though on formal occasions all will still gather together at the original *padar* of the village and its hamlets, and acknowledge there the authority of the headman and priest of the parent village. In the Abujhmar hills, moreover, each village is still inhabited almost entirely by members of one clan, and all the lands of the villages are regarded as the lands of the clan. But in the Bison-horn country, though each parish is still said to be the *bhum* (earth) of the clan which first settled there, yet there are generally in the village many houses of other clans and wife-clans, from whom the first settlers and their descendants have taken wives. Though they will still say that a certain village is the *bhum*
[423] of the clan that founded it, yet in consequence of the many representatives of other clans settled there now the village and its lands are not looked on as that clan's property in anything like the same degree as among the Hill Marias, nor in actual fact is the original clan so free to shift the village as it was before it allowed its wife-clans to share its village site and cultivable lands. Often, too, the headman is no longer a member of the settler clan. If,
[166] therefore, a Bison-horn village does shift in these days, the move is probably due to superstitious motives, or to epidemic or epizootic disease.

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CHAPTER VII

AGRICULTURE

THE whole life of the Maria is primarily directed towards the raising of food from the earth, either by cultivation, or by gathering the fruits of the forest, or by fishing, hunting or trapping. His agriculture, as we have seen, determines the sites of his villages, and regulates his relations with his wife. His festivals, it will be seen, are designed either to ensure the benevolence of the earth and the ancestors and the clan-god towards the crops about to be sown, or to celebrate the first eating of each of the main crops, and the final harvest-home, in a spirit of communal thanksgiving. The human population to him is the crop of men that the *Bhum* or Earth raises for the clan, or for the Ruling Chief.

The Hill Maria still regards the crops as the result of the combined labours of the village rather than of the labours of individuals. If one suffers, all suffer, and all combine to support the old and the needy, and to help each fellow villager to get through the heaviest parts of the yearly agricultural round. The young man on marriage, or the fellow clansman settling in the village, must have his share of the village lands for cultivation. In the raising of crops, then, the village and not the individual cultivator is the unit, even now, in the Abujhmar hills. But the Bison-horn Maria is an individualist. He has lived long in contact with semi-Hinduized neighbours, and has long begun to practise the more advanced methods of the settled cultivator. Permanent cultivation fosters individualism. Even in the Abujhmar hills the few permanent rice fields are definitely the private property of individuals; and as the use of the plough spreads and more and more of the wet lands become permanent rice fields, the owners of these fields begin more and more to assert in their shifting cultivation plots the rights of permanent private ownership already admitted in their rice fields. This has already happened among the Bison-horn Marias, aided by the rapid growth of population increasing the pressure on the land and reducing the land available for distribution to newcomers to the villages. The indications are that formerly they shared the communal attitude of the Hill Maria. In describing, therefore, the agricultural life of the community, I shall deal primarily with that of the Hill Marias, indicating where necessary the different developments among the Bison-horn Marias.

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It will be convenient to describe here the religious ceremonies of the Hill Marias, so bound up are they with their agriculture; but as the agricultural ceremonies of the Bison-horn Marias are much more elaborate, it will be more appropriate to describe them in dealing with religion in Part IV. Unless, therefore, I state otherwise, the ceremonies mentioned in this chapter will be those of the Hill Marias only.

In previous chapters, when speaking of the shifting cultivation of the Marias, the term which I have generally used is *penda*.

Systems of cultivation

Central Provinces literature has used the general terms *dahia* or *bewar* indiscriminately for all forms of cultivation in which crops are raised on the ashes of trees felled and burned for that purpose. In Bastar *dahi* is the Halbi term applied to the system of cutting trees or brushwood in the forest, and bringing them to an old unembanked field, where they are spread out to dry and then fired just before the rains break. Such fields are always level, and not hill slopes. The practice is known to the Hill and the Bison-horn Marias, and called *parka*; but as it is usually applied to old fields that have lain fallow (or occasionally to a rice field which is to be sown with a dry crop), the Hill Marias make little use of it, but will take more to it now that the substitution of a poll-tax for the former attempt to impose a regular land revenue settlement is encouraging them to re-cultivate old rice fields and to bring the flat *marhan* lands under cultivation. It can be seen in the villages between Orcha and Chhota Dongar, on the edge of the Hill Maria country, where the hills begin to open out into broad valleys.

Flat lands covered with forest growth which is cleared from time to time and burned for shifting cultivation are known in the Halbi language as *marhan*. The forest growth is felled *in situ* and spread out to dry in January or February; it is fired towards the end of May, and the ashes are spread evenly over the soil with an instrument like a squeegee with a handle eleven or twelve feet long, called *dosna-dang* in Halbi and *parka-lathi* by the Marias; as the name makes it clear, this is used for spreading the ashes in *parka* or *dahi* cultivation also. The ashes are ploughed into the ground after the first fall of rain. *Marhan* cultivation is called *dippa* by Murias and Hill Marias, and *erka* by the Bison-horn Marias, who subdivide it further into *mudur-erka* or timber forest *marhan*, and *marram-erka* or scrub-jungle *marhan*. These flat lands can be cultivated for only two years normally; in the first year the undergrowth is cut, the smaller trees and some boughs of big trees, while the big trees are girdled. To provide ashes for the second year, the big trees girdled the year before are felled, after piles of

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dry brushwood have been burnt round their feet if the girdling has not prevented some sap again rising. Ultimately, if these lands do not have a long enough rest between successive clearings, the forest loses its power of regeneration; and it is to such former *dippa* or *erka* lands that the *parka* or *dahi* system described above is applied. *Dippa* is fairly common between Orcha and Chhota Dongar, and it is because there is plenty of land still available to ensure each *dippa* an adequate rest that *parka* cultivation is so uncommon. But in the more open country of the large Bison-horn Maria villages much land seems to have lost its forest regenerative power, and every remaining non-fruit tree has its boughs lopped year after year to provide fuel to be carted off to the old *erka* lands for *parka* cultivation till it looks, when its new leaves sprout, like a Lombardy poplar in shape. The raking of the ashes with the *parka-lathi* in the height of the hot weather is very exhausting, and the men who do this work often suffer for some days later from very dark-coloured urine.

Both *dippa* (*erka*) and *parka* are more advanced methods of cultivation than the Hill Maria's favourite *penda* or hill slope cultivation. For this he fells and burns the forest growth on the hill slopes, which are often very steep. Beyond roughly distributing the unburnt material over the slope, and, wearing wooden clogs or strips of *saja* bark to protect the soles of his feet, poking unburnt logs into a burning patch with long bamboo poles, he does not try to spread the ashes evenly, or use the *parka-lathi*, and consequently adjacent patches of crops vary greatly in height and density. He sows the seed broadcast in the ashes after the rains have broken, and does not attempt to dig up the soil of the slopes with his *gudari* hoe except in the few patches where the sown seed does not germinate; these he roughly scarifies and resows. The *Gazetteer* (p. 54) repeats the story that the seed is 'sown along the top of the slope from which the rain water washes it down and spreads it over the field'; the bare idea of this makes Hill and Bison-horn Maria laugh, and it is obvious that if sowing were so much left to chance, the only parts of the slope producing any crops would be the sides of the natural drainage channels. The Hill Maria does scarify his rare permanent rice fields and sometimes his *dippa* land with his hoe, and one man in three hundred may use a plough on them; but the Bison-horn Maria uses his plough on rice field, *parka* and *erka* and even occasionally on the lower and less steep parts of his *penda* slopes, while he scarifies with his hoe all that he does not plough.

In most Hill Maria parishes *penda* is the only kind of cultivation, and though in much of the Bison-horn country permanent

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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241 rice cultivation, semi-permanent *parka* fields, and the less ephemeral *erka* cultivation have displaced it, yet tracts remain like those round Katakalian and Kuakonda, from Paknar to Massenar, where *penda* still reigns supreme, and in late May hillside after hillside here is speckled grey with the fresh ashes of the newly burned timber, or there is dotted with the vivid green of the fresh undergrowth shooting up from the old roots and stumps which have somehow survived the last three years of fire and axe; hard by are patches of pole forest ready for their turn of *penda*, when the newly fired plots are exhausted. Though maps show such areas in the Bison-horn country as forest, they are really all cultivated areas, on which forest is grown in rotation with other crops as a source of fertilizing nitrates; and here every slope and every patch of forest has passed into the separate possession of individuals. The extent of *penda* cultivation in the Abujhmar hills is less apparent to the eye, as the population is far sparser and the parish lands far wider. The slopes successively cultivated get a longer fallow period, and are farther apart.

This shifting forest cultivation is criticized from two points of view. The forestry enthusiast laments the passing of much fine forest, and foretells desiccation and erosion. Others condemn *penda* as a lazy method of cultivation. The former forgets that in most of this area the forests have been too remote and inaccessible ever to be exploited, and that, even though some fine timber has been sacrificed, much that has gone was hopelessly over-mature. Vast areas of forest have been reserved by the State, and it has not been possible to work half of these reserves. The Maria does not range through his forests clearing patches for cultivation at random; he has more or less definite rotations, and the clearings after two or three years' cultivation may get twelve or fourteen years' rest, at the end of which they have a dense forest growth. Few signs are apparent of erosion, save in the more open parts of the Bison-horn country where *erka* has cleared the plains below the hills of forest; and there are no signs of any reduction in the heavy rainfall. In the remaining *penda* lands of the Bison-horn Marias no good timber is destroyed; whether these lands are at the moment growing grain or bush, they should now be regarded as lands under cultivation. The axe and fire of the *penda* cultivator have let light and civilization penetrate slowly but surely into the Bison-horn country as nothing else would have done for centuries; they alone have prevented the Abujhmar hills remaining a trackless wilderness.

It is a superficial criticism that condemns *penda* cultivation as lazy. The clearing of the land, especially if it be covered with heavy timber, is most arduous. Remote and sometimes almost

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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perpendicular slopes two or three miles from the village have to be cleared; the wood and scrub spread over the ground, which, in the Bison-horn country, has beforehand been dug over with the hoe or, perhaps, on the lower and less steep slopes, ploughed with great difficulty; field-houses, sheds and watching platforms have to be built on the *penda* slopes. The firing of the *penda* is particularly arduous; the stumps have to be cleared of the shoots that spring up when the rains have set in; and where deer or bison are numerous the clearings have to be fenced with heavy timber fencing. Man and woman here have unaided to do all that regular plains cultivators do with the aid of ox and plough, and much more besides. They do not weed their crops, and they broadcast their seed; here alone they save labour which falls to the regular cultivator, not out of laziness, but from ignorance.

For convenience the names which the Hill Maria gives to the months may here be stated:—

	English	*Maria*
The cultivator's year	December-January	Pusi
	January-February	Mah
	February-March	Phagur
	March-April	Chaita
	April-May	Mur
	May-June	Na
	June-July	Ha'i
	July-August	Hagh
	August-September	Eranj
	September-October	Eram
	October-November	Orma
	November-December	Pa, or Pand

The Bison-horn Maria uses generally the local Hindu names for the months. The calendar is, of course, lunar, the word *lenj* meaning either moon or month. Of the above names the first four are obvious corruptions of the Hindu names Pus, Magh, Phalgun and Chait. Mur is explained as meaning 'beginning'; 'to begin' is *mur kiyana*. Na is a shortened form of *nalung*, the numeral 4, Ha'i of *ha'ingu* (5), Hagh of *argu* (6), while the other four names are derived from forms akin to the Telugu words for 7, 8, 9 and 10, namely *eru* (7), *ermori* (8), *ormadu* (9) and *padu* (10); it is interesting to note that although ordinarily the Hill Maria, except on the southern edge of the Abujhmar hills, has Gondi forms only for numbers 1 to 6, and after that uses the Hindi numerals, in the nomenclature of the months he remembers Dravidian forms for numbers 7 to 10. He counts the year as beginning in Mur, though some will say Na. (The Bison-horn Maria uses the local Hindu names for the months.) But as the actual round of agricultural operations begins with the felling of trees for the coming *penda*

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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241 805 cultivation, it will be convenient to start this account from the new moon of Phagur, that is to say, the new moon nearest to the end of February, before which it is not considered right to start cutting forest for *penda*, though the work is started two or three weeks earlier for *dippa* cultivation. The choice of the *kaghai* site (see p. 107 above) for the *penda* will have been made beforehand, either in informal discussion among the village elders or at the ceremony after *Koqsar*, the great concluding harvest festival, at which the *kasyeq-gaita* seated on his *udam-garia* seat of honour with the villagers seated around him, confirms by formal pronouncement the decisions probably already reached in informal discussions with the elders about the village arrangements for the coming year.

241 Before the felling of the forest may begin, a further ceremony takes place. I attended the ceremony at Orcha on March 11th, 1934, when the moon of Phagur was nearly full. At about 1 p.m. the *kasyeq-gaita* with the elders proceeded to the selected *kaghai*, which was covered with a dense growth of sapling sal trees; the oldest villager present, a man of about fifty, said that he was a small child when it had last been cultivated. There Usendi Delu, the *kasyeq-gaita*, cleared a small piece of ground at the foot of a *saja* tree, set up a stone on it against a root of the tree, and placed an egg upright on its pointed end in front of the stone. He then squatted on the ground before the stone to the right of the egg, and Usendi Moda, the *gaita* or secular headman, to the left of the egg. Both put their hands together, palm to palm, touched the ground below the egg with them and raised them to their foreheads, uttering in unison the formula, '*Bhum kenji! Talugh kenji! Jimme jaga kenji! Anam pirka a'i, nehna nehna manna a'i! Kohla pandi! irka gumur hadi!*' (Earth hearken! Mother hearken! All that is here and around hearken! Let our crops and vegetables grow here, let them grow and yield full increase! Let our *kutki* ripen! Let our cucumbers and pumpkins mature!) They repeated the formula in unison, again saluted the earth in front of the egg, and then arose. The congregation of elders which had squatted around them and kept silence all through the ceremony also arose, and everyone returned to the village, leaving the egg there unbroken. There was no formal felling of the first tree, and no allotment of the different plots of *penda* land.

241 423 From this ceremony onwards all are free to start felling. There is no formal allotment, but villagers divide up the land by mutual discussion, the size of each plot depending on the number of persons in the household to be fed and capable of doing a full day's work with axe and hoe. It is largely a matter of one man volunteering to clear one plot and another man the next, and so on;

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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the preparation of the *kaghai* site is a task to be accomplished by the whole village. Disputes are practically unknown, owing to this strong feeling of community of interest. There is, moreover, in the Abujhmar hills ample land for all, and any man is free to work harder than others if he likes to cultivate a larger plot; but he seldom does so unless he either is a newly married newcomer to the village, bent on building up a reserve of grain, or has a large number of dependents. There is no guarantee that a man will have the same plot as that allotted to him when the *kaghai* was last previously cultivated, or even a plot of the same area; but in villages where land is not so ample as in others, and a *kaghai* may be cultivated therefore at shorter intervals, each man as far as possible is allowed the same plot that he occupied at the previous cutting, though he may have to contribute a part of his former land to accommodate newcomers or newly married youths. There are villages where either the *kasyeq-gaita* or the *gaita* is a strong man and has arrogated to himself a right to allot the *penda* plots; but he would get short shrift if he were unfair in his allotting: he is not a chief, but only *primus inter pares* among the village elders.

Plots once allotted and cultivated are for the time the private property of the householder who cultivates them, and he marks the limits of his cultivation either by leaving certain tree stumps to serve as boundary marks (the Bison-horn Marias who retain permanent rights over their *penda* plots are especially careful about this, the boundary trees often being left intact and not even lopped, save in so far as necessary to keep birds off the *penda*), or by planting lines of roselle (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) or of *til* (*Sesamum indicum*) along the edges of his plot; roselle with its crimson seed-vessels and *til* with its deep yellow blossoms make very vivid boundaries.

Each family fells its own *penda* plots, and the villagers do not combine to clear each plot in turn as they combine in threshing. The work takes two or three weeks, and the men do all the heavy work, though women and children assist in cutting small trees and undergrowth and in arranging them for firing. Any fruit trees are carefully spared. If any of the ground is dug up with *gudari* hoes, men do most of the work, though they leave it to women on the flat *dippa* lands or on the gentler *penda* slopes. The iron *pulu* digging stick is used for grubbing up roots large enough to be a serious impediment. Much timber, when the growth is heavy, is reserved for fencing the *penda* against wild animals, where any herds of deer survive. The wood is left to dry through the heat of April and May, which are holiday months.

When the wood is dry, the *kasyeq-gaita* calls a meeting in the village dormitory to fix a day for firing. All the villagers combine

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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241 to fire all the *penda* plots simultaneously, and the women take no part in this work. There is no public ceremony before the firing; but the *kasyeq-gaita* starts it for the whole village by firing the first bundle of dried brushwood in his own plot with a bundle of dried grass kindled from a glowing ember brought from his own house; he makes fire with a fire-saw only if no ember is available or if it has died on its way to the *penda*. At Handawada in May 1930, heavy rain fell, and so delayed the firing of the *penda* that the *kasyeq-gaita* and village elders went in deputation to the clan-god Verma Pen of the Gume clan at Toinar and promised to sacrifice a cock to him if he would stop the rain; he only received his cock after he had fulfilled the condition and it had been possible to fire the *penda*. The firing takes only three or four days if the wood is really dry.

241 417 Between firing and sowing there is only a short interval in which the villagers must work hard to prepare their fences and field houses. There are no fences between individual plots as a rule, these being marked off either by lines of *til* or roselle at sowing, as already explained, or by laying a few poles lengthwise along the edge of the plots; but there is a general fence around each block of plots, except where there is no risk of animals damaging the crops. A type of fencing found only around Orcha and the Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana*, known as *kokor* (crooked) *garpi*, is a zig-zag stockading of logs laid horizontally on each other, the sides of each projecting angle being fifteen or twenty feet long; it looks like a vast herringbone pattern climbing the hillside. Grass *tum* fences, made in the same way as the *tum* partitions of houses already described, are used where the need for protection from animals is less, and, where bamboo is very plentiful, bamboo wattle-work fences. Another type of substantial timber fence is the *welma* fence consisting of poles laid horizontally one on another, held in position between pairs of bamboo uprights driven into the ground, and tied together at intervals between the horizontal poles; the upright bamboos are generally the two halves of a thick bamboo split lengthwise. I have not noticed in the hill villages the stockades of sal piles driven into the ground which are common among the Murias of the north and are met in Bison-horn Maria villages also.

241 342 513 [374] The chief field-house is really a sleeping platform raised high above the level of the crops on wooden piles, similar to the field watchers' *machan* found throughout Central India, but far more elaborate; the space between the piles below the platform is walled round with bamboo wicker-work or *tum*, and there is a thick thatched roof. As in the dormitories, a fire is kept burning at night below the platform to warm those sleeping on it. Tools and weapons, and cooking pots and food, are kept in the room below the platform,

PLATE XIII

[facing p. 132]

HILL MARIA *PENDA* FIELD, JUST HARVESTED, DUDMARKA, KUTRU MAR

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Plate p. 132

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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241 and frequently fowls also, and dogs. From the platform radiate
342 cords of *siari* twine to bamboo rattles hung from trees or posts in
513 various parts of the field, to enable the occupant to scare birds or animals. It is taboo (*polo*) for women to sleep in these field-houses (*dodi*). Less elaborate sleeping or resting platforms are also made which are really cots surrounded with rough round bamboo walls; for women to cook and to rest in during the heat of the day rough conical shelters are made of bamboos and leaves, like Red Indian
241 wigwams, known as *panambaksha*. They may also erect big and
343 small sheds called *ketul*, consisting of thatched eaves resting on upright posts, unwalled; rough granaries for storing grain until it is removed after the harvest to the permanent granaries; and log platforms for stacking the reaped sheaves.

241 Sowing is begun after the first showers of the monsoon rains, in Na month. The date is fixed at a meeting of the men in the dormitory (*gotul-lon*) a day or two beforehand.

[834] **Sowing** From the night before the sowing (*wijja'i*) till all the seeds have sprouted, it is taboo for men to cohabit with their wives, and they therefore sleep with the bachelors in the dormitory.
241 Before sunrise on sowing day the head of each family goes to the forest and picks two *saja* leaves to serve as 'seed-leaves' (*wijj-ahk*).
769 These he brings into the *lonu* room of his house, and lays on the floor near the Pot of the Departed; he squats down before them, raises his hands, palm to palm, to his forehead, and lowers them, fists closed, to the floor in front of the leaves, saying, '*Tador-pepi mit kenjat! Miku har kihanom, inje kenjatu, aru maki nehna nehna anam wayi! Inje ram aimatu, manemasi mantu!*' (Hearken, O Ancestors! We adjure you, hearken now, and let us have an excellent harvest! Let not your wrath now fall upon us, and be not deaf to my prayer).[1] He then hangs the two leaves from the kitchen (*angadi*) ceiling, where they remain till next seed-time, when he takes them down, and deposits them on a forest path.

241 On behalf of all the villagers also, the *kasyeq-gaita* makes a public offering of an egg to the Village Mother, either at her regular shrine or at some white ants' hill close to the village (not in the *penda* fields), before they go out to sow. No women may attend this ceremony.

At the first sowing they broadcast the early ripening varieties of the hill millets over about half the *penda* plots, and sow also lines of *til* or roselle to mark the limits of individual holdings. Subsequent sowings of later crops are not preceded by any ceremony.

[1] Literally, word by word, 'Ancestors, you hear! To you remembrance we make, now hear, and to-us good good harvest let-be! Now anger let-not-be, hearing abide.'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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The people of Bastar are apt to use the Halbi word *kosra* as a generic term for all grains raised by *penda* cultivation. Strictly speaking, it applies only to *kutki*, *Panicum miliaceum*, which the Marias and Murias call *kohala*, to which they also give the same wider meaning as *kosra*. The early sown grains are called generically ' small *kosra* ', and those most sown are *Panicum frumentaceum*, known as *sawa* or *ghatka* or, to the Hill Marias, as *amu*, and *Panicum miliare*, known as *sika* or *chikma*, which seems also to be the grain known to the Hill Marias as *turya-kohala* ; others sown are *kodon* (*Paspalum scrobiculatum*), *mandia* (*Eleusine coracana*) and *hikka*, a Hill Maria word which I have not been able to identify ; the Bison-horn Marias, and, to a much smaller extent, some Hill Marias, also sow much *haruna* or light mountain rice. All these are sown generally without any pulses, but cucumbers, marrows and gourds are sown early near the field-houses. *Panicum frumentaceum* and *Panicum miliare* ripen generally in time for their New Eating festivals to take place at the end of Hagh (July-August) ; the mountain rice and other early grains are reaped a little later, at the beginning of Eranj (August-September).

Crops

The second main sowing is of the later crops known collectively as ' big *kosra* ', chief of which is the true *kosra* or *kutki* (*Panicum miliaceum*), with which will be met *kodon*, *kang* (*Setaria italica*) and *bajra* (*Penicillaria spicata*). These are sown in Ha'i (June-July), to be harvested in Pa (November-December). No attempt is made to keep the different crops separate, and the confusion is made worse by broadcasting with them seeds of various pulses, especially *urad* (*Phaseolus radiatus* ; Maria, *pupal*), *arhar* (*Cajanus indicus*), and *sem* (*Dolichos lablab* ; Maria, *jata*).

The third sowing is the ' *Os kosra* ' sowing of a second crop in August-September on the land from which the ' small *kosra* ' harvest has already been reaped. About a quarter of this is sown with ' *os kosra* ' millets, the remaining three-quarters being devoted to pulses, including not only varieties of the ' big *kosra* ' pulses, but also *mung* (*Phaseolus mungo*) and *kulthi* (both *Glycine hispida* and *Dolichos biflorus*). This crop is harvested in Pusi (December-January).

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The rains bring out a plentiful crop of shoots from the stumps of the trees felled for the *penda*, and before these get too big a day is appointed for all the villagers to cut and get rid of them. As soon as the ears form on the growing crops it is taboo for the men to have sexual intercourse or to sleep in the village. This taboo remains in force until the final combined New Urad and Koqsar festival, when it is held at the end of Pusi

After sowing

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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(December-January) or in Mah (January-February); if the clan celebrates the festival later (the Jate clan of Mohnar in Mangnar *pargana*, for example, with its brother clans the Tokalor and the Hukur of Erpanar, celebrates it on the full moon day of Chait (March-April)), the men return to their houses and are free to resume marital relations as soon as the last grain has been winnowed, when the *pen-wadda'i* or clan-priest of the village where the clan-god is kept offers an egg before him, and in the subordinate villages of the clan which have no separate clan-god of their own the *kasyeq-gaita* offers an egg before the Village Mother. In some tracts where the New Urad-Koqsar festival is late there is a separate New Kosra festival in Pusi (December-January), and this appears there to be the signal for the ending of this taboo (*polo*). For it is not only sexual relations and sleeping in the village that are taboo in this period; but also such activities as the cutting of bamboos and grass, which obviously cannot be postponed so late as Phagur and Chait.

While the taboo lasts, and the men live in the fields, the women sleep in the village, and arrive in the fields at sunrise, bringing the day's food already cooked. The men, before starting their day's work, have a substantial meal of *gato* (Hindi, *bhat*) or thick porridge of mixed hill grains, spiced with the various pulses, roselle and other forest fruits and vegetables, salted, and improved by flesh, if available, of field mice, hares or birds. At about 10 a.m. and again at 2 p.m. they expect to have *jawa* (Hindi, *pej*) or thin gruel consisting of the water in which their *gato* has been boiled. They have a final meal of *gato* at sunset, which the women cook in the fields and give their men to eat there, taking back their own share to eat in the village. Cooking pots are kept generally in the *ketul*. At harvest, to save time and enable the women to get to work earlier, the morning meals also are cooked in the fields. On the last day before a woman is due for the seclusion of the menstruation room or hut, she brings food sufficient to last her menfolk that day and the next five.

Harvest

No ceremony precedes reaping. Men, women and children reap, using small iron sickles of the type common throughout the Central Provinces. I have not seen the reaping of the early grains. The *penda* fields in early December are an untidy sight; the various grains and pulses are sown higgledy-piggledy all over the area, and no attempt is made to keep different crops separate. Reaping is therefore an eclectic and slow performance, especially of such grains as *kang* and *bajra*, little of which are sown, and which have, therefore, to be searched for in the welter of other crops. *Sem* and other pulses riot over the poles planted in

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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241 [417] the midst of the grain crops to support them. The cut crops which are to be threshed are stacked on the wooden platforms prepared before sowing, in beehive shaped stacks, called *paki* by the Hill Marias and *kupa* in Halbi.

The women prepare the threshing-floor (*karanu* in the hill dialect), clearing a piece of ground near the stacks of grain, and plastering it with mud. In the centre of this the men erect a thick [784] bamboo railing on posts. It is *polo* for women to take part in the actual threshing. Oxen are never used. For each cultivator in [476] turn, beginning with the *kasyeq-gaita*, all the men and boys in the village combine to thresh (*wisna*). They range themselves in two rows facing each other, with the bamboo railing between them.[1] Holding this with both their hands and supporting themselves by it, they dance up and down, rubbing the ears of corn between their feet. They thresh in this way only *kodon*, *kutki*, rice, *ghatka*, *chikma* and *hikka*; the women pick the ears of grains like *kang* and *bajra* in baskets, and rub them in their hands to extract the grain. The cultivator whose grain is being threshed is expected to feed all the villagers helping him for that day, and if possible to give them [273] a good drink of *salphi*, the fermented sap of the sago palm (*Caryota urens*; Maria, *garga marra*), which is raised from cuttings in large numbers all over the Hill Maria country. The threshed grain is winnowed by men only, winnowing being as taboo to women as sleeping in the fields or threshing. One man stands on a rough wooden platform and pours the grain from a basket held above his head, while another, if there is not wind enough, winnows the falling grain with a basketry winnowing fan of the usual Indian type (*het* in Maria). All the men and women of the village combine to carry the threshed and winnowed grain of each cultivator to his compartment in the long granary. They never measure their produce, but there is no taboo on this account; it simply is that they grow crops for their own sustenance, and not for sale, and it is easy to see whether the grain garnered is adequate for the coming year or 804 not. They do indeed understand something of bazaar measures, for some of their pulses and oil seeds are sold annually to raise the money needed to pay their poll-tax; they make their own measures of basketry, with different traditional shapes for each kind of produce that they sell; and at the bazaar you may see them measuring out their produce in these in front of the Hindu tradesmen to whom they are selling it. Their measures are very accurate, and need never be challenged. If they make them a little too large, they plaster a little mud over the bottom to reduce the capacity.

[1] I have since seen *kodon* and *kutki* threshed in the same way by Korkus on the Betul border of Hoshangabad District, Central Provinces.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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The Bison-horn Marias (and, I believe, many of the Murias also) have similar ideas of it being taboo for women to sleep in the fields and to thresh or winnow. They are not so particular about the cessation of conjugal life between the sowing and sprouting of the crops, and between their coming into ear and being garnered. They use bullocks to tread out the grain on a threshing floor. Each cultivator has to take the help of his fellow villagers to carry his corn, but it is a service for which he hires them, and not a routine piece of communal village service in gathering the village crop as in the Abujhmar hills.

It is taboo to eat any of the new crops until the appropriate new-eating festival has been celebrated. These are very similar to the *pandum* festivals of the Bison-horn Marias, which will be described in the chapter on religion; but they are less elaborate and are fewer in number; the Bison-horn Maria seems to have a *pandum* as an essential preliminary to almost every act of gathering the produce of field or forest. The Hill Maria has only three, or, in villages where the last festival is held as late as March or early April, four of these festivals. The first is known either as *Tur Korta Tindana* or *Amu Korta Tindana*, according as the chief of the early ripening rains crops is *Panicum miliare* (*turya-kohala*) or *Panicum frumentaceum* (*amu*), and is held at the end of Hagh, that is about the middle of August. In Eranj (September) comes *Hikka Korta Tindana* in villages, like Handawada, where there is no rice cultivation, and *hikka* (see p. 134 above) is the chief crop ripening next after the August crops; where much rice (*wanj*) is grown, *Wanj Korta Tindana* is celebrated instead at the end of Eram (middle of October). This is followed in Pusi (January) in the villages where the final festival is celebrated after February by *Kohala Korta Tindana*, the first eating of the main *Panicum miliaceum* (*kutki*) crop. The last and greatest festival, held on dates varying from the end of January till early April in different clan-areas, is *Pupal Korta Tindana*, combined with *Koqsar*, the clan-god's festival; when this takes place early enough in the year to be economically convenient, it is the new-eating festival not only of *urad* (*pupal*; *Phaseolus radiatus*) and other pulses and beans, but also of *kutki* and the other late ripening hill grains. '*Korta Tindana*' is Hinduized literally as '*nawa khana*', 'new eating'. A main reason for the varying dates of this last festival is that dancing is permissible only at it, at weddings and at the camps of touring officials. The round of festivities after the final harvest-home is prolonged by celebrating the festival clan after clan; all the youths of neighbouring clans go to dance at each other's *Koqsar*,

The new-eating festivals of the Hill Marias

241 ● 796 [535]

[see cat. 116, p. 420. – Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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important, for then the *kasyeq-gaita* and, in a minor degree, the secular headman have their hour of glory, and something of the honour that might be paid to real chieftains. The *kasyeq-gaita* as intermediary between the Village Mother and her children sacrifices to her a pig and a cock, and sets before her a basket of new *kutki*, pulses and beans. A feast similar to that before the clan-god follows. Then the *kasyeq-gaita* proceeds to his *udam-garia* or seat-of-honour, next to which may be a smaller seat for the secular headman (*gaita* or *peda*); it is either a long, flat boulder, or a flat stone supported on stone legs, as in Plate XXIII. He wears no insignia, and is to all appearance as naked and poor a Maria as all his villagers. The men seat themselves around in a circle on little stone cromlechs. Then the *kasyeq-gaita* formally announces the programme for the next year, what *penda* slope is to be cultivated, what arrangements are to be made to meet State or zamindari demands for land revenue or labour, and so on; the announcements, it is true, are the results of previous informal village discussions, and not the *kasyeq-gaita's* orders independently conceived by him, but his formal promulgation is needed before they can be brought into effect.

After *Koqsar* they are free to cut grass and bamboos, and to collect forest produce, or to hunt; it is true that in most villages there is little game but hares and field-mice, but a Maria thinks a field-mouse the rarest of delicacies, and will stop any occupation to chase a mouse or dig them out.[1] But the long year is over at last, and till the next sowing, though there is ahead the labour of felling, spreading and firing the wood for the *penda*, taboos are lifted, and there is no fear of harm to growing things from the queer magic inherent in sex. So now is the season of new marriages and of conjugal life in the home, and the seed is sown for the raising of the human crop.

Assessment and payment of land revenue among the Hill Marias

It has been indicated that there are the beginnings of permanent cultivation among the Hill Marias. As a matter of fact, several villages have traces of old rice embanked fields. Two things long effectively checked the spread of permanent cultivation. One, before the 1910 rebellion, was the presence of a police station at Kutul, the headquarter village of the Bardal clan and *pargana* in the very heart of the Abujhmar hills. This meant a constant demand from the Kutul police for rice as *bisaha*,[2] and

[1] I had a carefully arranged beat for a family of man-eating tigers at Kutru ruined because the Hill Maria beaters rushed in wild enthusiasm to catch two or three mice disturbed by the beat.

[2] See p. 14 above.

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the few who grew it soon abandoned its cultivation and returned to the hill grains which the police would not eat. The second thing, even more potent than the demand for *bisaha* because of its universality, was the land revenue policy. In the remotest times the hill villages paid what little assessment the Chiefs imposed on them in kind, royal granaries being situated at centres like Barsur, Partabpur and Narainpur. There is no need to believe the picturesque story told first to Elliot in 1853 and since repeated by writers down to Russell and Hiralal, that 'their tribute to the Raja of Bastar, paid in kind, was collected once a year by an officer who beat a tom-tom outside the village and forthwith hid himself, whereupon the inhabitants brought out whatever they had to give and deposited it on an appointed spot'[1]; this is one of the typical tales with which the old State officials used to try to disguise their utter ignorance of every part of their charge except the handful of villages in their immediate vicinity. But in actual fact there was no regular assessment. The secular headman of the village (*gaita* or *peda*) collected as a rough poll-tax from every able-bodied male cultivator whatever he could fairly be called upon to contribute in kind, and delivered the village contribution at the royal granary. Even when the Chief in 1865 and 1872 attempted for the first time to settle villages with outside lessees and to assess the land revenue on the basis of fixed payments partly in cash and partly in kind for every plough, his officers made no effort to interfere with the traditional system in the Abujhmar hills. But after the State came under management in 1891, the authorities aimed at gradually introducing improved settlement methods based on the experience of British districts in the Central Provinces. The general method was to ascertain the rate per plough imposed at the late Raja's last settlement, to decide what enhancement per plough each village could bear, and then to ascertain the number of ploughs in each cultivator's possession and in the whole village. The number of ploughs was estimated from a rough calculation of the seed capacity of each field, and further checked by comparison with the number of cattle, counted when brought home to the village in the evening. In the better cultivated parts of Bastar, seed capacity of 7½ *khandis*[2] was regarded as a plough of land, and in the jungly parts seed capacity of 5½ *khandis*. Simultaneously, every effort was made to extend to all parts of the State the leasing of villages to *thekadars* or lessees, who were available in numbers in the open and settled parts and only too ready to seize the chance of getting the aboriginal

[1] Russell and Hiralal, Vol. III, p. 120.

[2] The Bastar *khandi* is a measure equivalent to 40 *paili* or 160 *soli*; a *soli* contains 40 *tolas*, or approximately 1 lb.'s weight of rice.

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villages there for nothing, with the hope of appropriating the best village lands for themselves and getting them tilled by the forced labour of the villagers. The theory was that good and substantial cultivators from outside the State would bring capital and improved methods into Bastar and play something of the part played by the landlord in the development of English agriculture. In practice the *thekedari* system was the cause of untold harm even in the permanent villages of the State, where the alien *thekedar* destroyed the solidarity of village and tribal life besides mercilessly exploiting the aboriginals, whom indeed he goaded into rebellion in 1910. Luckily, I was able to secure its abolition for the future, and every opportunity has been taken to resume management of the villages through the headmen when a lease has fallen in or in cases of mismanagement.

When the authorities tried to apply the system to wild regions like the Abujhmar hills, fortunately for the Hill Marias their reputation as sorcerers was such, and their cultivation was so primitive, that no foreigners would take leases of their villages. There were hardly any ploughs, and the problem of estimating the seed capacity of *penda* plots on remote and steep hillsides was too much for the wits and energy of badly paid Hindu *patwaris*. A farcical record was, however, prepared of the number of 'hoe-ploughs' of land cultivated by each Hill Maria on the basis of a seed capacity assumed in nine cases out of ten by pure guess-work, the *patwari* and his superior officials never going near the villages. Individual assessments were then made on each man, in spite of the communal feeling in regard to the land. These assessments varied in their incidence without rhyme or reason, except that they had been based on guess-work. Men deserted their villages in large numbers and migrated into the Chanda part of the hills or into the Bastar zamindaris, with which the authorities were not so concerned. As it was felt that every good village should have a lessee, and no outsider would come near, the hapless headman of many a village was made to put his thumb-mark to a lease deed of his village, only to find himself in consequence legally responsible for the whole village assessment, even if his villagers had absconded or were unable to pay. The post of headman became one to be avoided or nominally given to the simpleton of the village, whom the villagers would put forward as a figurehead, while the *kasyeq-gaita* retained the religious headmanship and was the real headman so far as the villagers were concerned. No allowance was made for the vagaries of shifting cultivation; though one year a man newly married or with a large growing family to support might be allowed by the village a larger *penda* area than others, and after a year or two

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would get only the normal share, yet, if the settlement took place in the first year, he might find himself saddled for all the period of settlement with a rent estimated on the seed capacity of that year. If a man dies, his widow is maintained by the village community and does not have her own cultivation; the taboo customs make any other arrangement impossible: but the State authorities would expect her, till the end of the settlement, to pay the rent assessed on her husband in his lifetime, and in practice this became a charge on the village. Villages themselves shift, as we have seen; and sometimes some villagers settle in one *paghai* and some in another. The *patwaris* would report these as two villages, and the settlement arrangements would be made accordingly. When *patwaris* came to prepare the annual rent papers, they might find that the villagers were cultivating a new *paghai* and say that they had not only to pay the rent assessed on the *paghai* that they were cultivating at settlement, but also an additional rent because they had also taken up 'new' land.

These are examples of the absurdities of the blind application to this most primitive race of assessment ideas evolved from those built up on long experience of other parts of India where there is little trace left of the old feelings of village solidarity. Fortunately, *patwaris* were too few, too tired and too afraid of 'Maria magic' to spend a moment longer in the Abujhmar hills than they could help; and those who should have checked their work shared their fears and found that there was more need of their presence in the tracts where assessments were considerable. A high and remote *penda* slope would never be visited at settlement, and even if the *patwari* made enquiries in his camp from assembled villagers they soon began to learn the virtues of concealment; the system, in fact, dealt a severe blow to the natural frankness of the people. The only kind of land that could not be concealed from the *patwari*, because always on the lower levels and close to the approach paths of the village, was the occasional patch of two or three permanent rice fields, on which promptly a very high rate of rent was assessed, little less than that applied in the rice lands of the good villages of the plains. The breaking of land into permanent cultivation should be regarded as an improvement in such tracts and exempted from enhancement of assessment. Cultivators with little use or understanding of money were scared at once by the prospect of more market bickering than ever to raise the cash to pay the enhanced rent, and before the 1927 Antagarh tahsil re-settlement practically all permanent rice cultivation had disappeared from the Abujhmar hills.

That 1927 settlement was, I hope, the last that will ever be attempted on such lines. The Settlement Officer did not personally

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visit any Maria village or check the work of his subordinates on the ground. He called in the headmen to camps in the plains below, and announced the new rents. All had been enhanced on the basis of these seed capacity statements. These were of the usual guess-work type. The *patwaris* did not even visit each village, but called all the villagers from three or four villages to one camp and asked them how much land they cultivated. If a man said that he was cultivating a large area, his word was accepted, and he was assessed accordingly. If he equally truly said that he was cultivating four or five acres, the *patwari* refused to believe it and wrote him down as holding a 'hoe-plough' of thirteen or fourteen acres. Naturally, many villagers deserted to other lands of their clans in the zamindaris. In the years following the settlement, *patwaris* went to each village to prepare the annual papers, and a *patwari* who wanted to make a show of zeal generally reported that more land was being cultivated than at settlement, and had the alleged new areas assessed. In 1930 I found many examples of this; at Handawada the villagers had been assessed at settlement to Rs. 33 for 124 acres, and, as in the next two years the *patwari* had reported new cultivation, the assessment had been raised to Rs. 41. On measuring the cultivation on the spot, I found that seventeen able-bodied cultivators in all had 68½ acres. Four or five acres is, in fact, enough *penda* land to provide sustenance for the ordinary Hill Maria family.

Government accepted my recommendation to cancel this settlement in the Hill Maria country, and in its place to impose a poll-tax on every able-bodied male over sixteen years of age. The number of assessees is to be checked every fifth year, and every other check will thus coincide with the decennial census, and save duplication of work. The headman and elders are made responsible for collection and payment, and arrears are leviable from the village as a whole, not from individuals; it is left to the village community to decide what to do to any individual slacker. A commission of 1¼ annas in the rupee is paid to the headman for prompt full payment. Rice or other permanent cultivation is not specially assessed. No annual papers are prepared. *Pari passu* with the quinquennial count of able-bodied men, cattle are to be counted for assessing grazing rates, the annual enumeration of cattle being abolished; the rates will not be varied during the five years, whatever the increase in the number of cattle. The changes apply to the whole of the Hill Maria country in Bastar, in whatever administrative division it is situated.

The re-settlement of the whole area on this basis was carried out after I had left Bastar, in 1932, and was everywhere welcomed

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by the Marias. It deals with the village community through its mouthpieces, the headmen and the elders. Many have returned to Bastar from the Chanda Maria country. The best sign which I observed when I spent the first month of my 1934 furlough in the Abujhmar hills was that the long abandoned rice fields are all being restored to cultivation. It is interesting to note that the headman has never ventured to keep the commission for himself, but always either divides it among the villagers, or by common consent spends it on pork or liquor for a village feast.

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In the Bison-horn country as a whole there is now as much permanent and semi-permanent cultivation as *penda*, and the *patwaris* have always been more accurate in their records. The people are more sophisticated and ready to safeguard their interests. The *penda* lands are fairly accessible, except in the hilliest parts. It has been pointed out already that each piece of each *penda* site, whether at the moment under bush or under crop, is now regarded as the individual holding of some cultivator. The people have many markets in their midst, and understand measures and seed capacities. It has not, therefore, been necessary to apply the poll-tax system there. A great deal could be done even there to turn the people from shifting to permanent cultivation by recognizing new permanent cultivation as an improvement.

Where the Hill Marias have started permanent cultivation they have in general adopted the methods of surrounding Murias or Bison-horn Marias, save that very few of them have mastered or attempted to master ploughing, but prepare the land with their *gudari* digging hoes. A few now keep hired Rawat herdsmen, but do not themselves tend, milk or work their cattle. If the recognition of permanent cultivation as an improvement could be combined with a determined attempt by the State to teach carting, ploughing and milking, even among the Bison-horn Marias, shifting cultivation would be greatly diminished.

Methods of permanent cultivation among the Hill Marias

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When he does grow rice, the Hill Maria generally does not irrigate it with water led from a storage reservoir or tank; his method is rather to build his dam across a stream or waterway and to cultivate the land above it. The illustration opposite shows both sides of the dam made in 1930 for cultivation of this kind at Tondawada; the deep hole below the dam was made when its predecessor was washed away by an abnormal flood. No water flows here in the cold weather. First a wall of grass *tum*[1] was erected along the length of the dam, and behind this a wall of *welma*[1] horizontal pole fencing, supported behind with thicker pole piles

[1] See p. 132 for definition of *tum* and *welma*.

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driven into the ground; these were buttressed further with slanting pole props with forked ends bearing against the vertical piles, while smaller forked poles were at intervals driven into the dam on either side of the piles, but below the slanting props. This vertical pole-revetting faced downstream. Against the upstream face of the grass *tum* earth was banked with a gentle slope and gently sloped off to ground level upstream. A large and nearly hollow tree-trunk was left in the middle of the dam, to act as a pipe to carry off excess water. They called the dam *nadi*, and the tank *ote*. It was not built to store water, but to retain moisture in the tank-bed, and it was the bed which was cultivated, being dug all over with the *gudari* before the rains. The dam was still serviceable when I visited Tondawada in 1934, four years later, and other small rice plots had been made higher up the waterway by placing low mud dams across it. Though the village had shifted from the adjacent site and the *penda* slopes under cultivation in 1934 were far away, these rice patches were being prepared for cultivation in readiness for the 1934 monsoon.

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Though it has been said above that the Bison-horn Maria has as much permanent or semi-permanent cultivation as *penda*, there are many tracts in his country where *penda* is his main occupation. All Gonds or Koitor, wherever I have met them, seem at heart to long to revert to the raising of the light millets off the ashes of felled timber; though it is prohibited in the British districts of the Central Provinces, I have seen it in the *jagir* estates of the Chhindwara and Hoshangabad districts, and in the Nagpur district the prospect of being allowed to do this for the first year or two was in 1932 the best bait for attracting Gond settlers to a forest village in Ramtek tahsil and even to a malguzar's waste lands village in Saoner tahsil. So it would take little to make the far less advanced Bison-horn Maria abandon permanent rice cultivation and stick to *penda* on the hill slopes or *erka* on the plains; and much of his semi-permanent cultivation is only *parka* cultivation of former *erka* lands necessitated by their final refusal to bear any more forest after years of shifting cultivation; instead of at once applying permanent methods to the land, he cuts brushwood from other forests and brings them to the deforested land to burn instead of the brushwood it bore in former years. But in these *parka* fields he can raise only rice, not his beloved small millets. In his *penda* fields he sows only *kuthi*, *Panicum miliaceum*, of the type sown as the main crop in the Abujhmar hills; but in many places the forest growth felled for his *penda* is almost pure bamboo, and here instead of *kuthi* he sows what he calls *gondku*, which I have not had identified.

Bison-horn Maria cultivation

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241 In his *mudur erka* (big tree *erka*) he raises *chikna* (*Panicum miliare*), *gatka* (*Panicum frumentaceum*) and *sama*, all crops of the first sowing, ripening by early August, and, as main crops, *mandia* (*Eleusine coracana*) which he calls *gurra*, and *kulthi*, which he, like the Hill Maria, calls *kokala*, both of which ripen with the *penda kulthi* in early December; with him *Eleusine coracana* is an important crop, as he uses it as a principal ingredient in his *landa* intoxicant. In his *marram erka* (brushwood *erka*) he sows only the pulses *urad* (*Phaseolus radiatus*), which he calls *popul*, and *kulthi* (*Glycine hispida* and *Dolichos biflorus*) which he calls *koreng*. The '*os kosra*' millets which the Hill Maria sows as a second crop after the crops reaped in August he calls '*mach kokala*', and sows not only similarly as a second crop, but also as the main crop in his *erka* land for the third and last year of its cultivation, when it is too exhausted to bear anything else.

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241 423 Besides the fact observed on page 128 above that, unlike the Hill Maria, he ploughs the ashes, or digs them with his hoe, into his *erka* and *penda* lands, these lands have, therefore, this further great difference from the Hill Maria *penda* lands, that each crop has its own appropriate type of cultivation, and is therefore sown separately, not jumbled up with every other kind of crop in a hopeless welter. He is, moreover, careful to preserve any mango or other fruit trees on his plot. As he retains permanent rights over his plot, whether it is tilth or forest at the moment, he has to be more careful over its boundaries than the Hill Maria, and cannot be content with the temporary sowing of a line of *til* or roselle. At each burning, therefore, he spares important trees or stumps at boundary junctions, which he calls *sarkari* or 'authority' trees, and sometimes he leaves a thin line of trees standing along his boundary when he fells the forest. He generally grows his beans and gourds on these and other trees, not on poles stuck up in the middle of other crops like the Hill Maria.

241 [417] [231] It has been seen that he has always a *bari* garden enclosure round or near his house in the village, which he calls *lon-welung* or 'house fencing', and generally fences with either bamboo wattle-work (*wadur-welung*) or a fence of brushwood tied slantwise between horizontal struts (*jhat-welung*). Here at night he pens his cattle, and the ground is thus richly manured to bear maize (*jonna*), *sarson* or mustard (*tarson*) and tobacco (*pogo*)[1] as essential crops, with in these days frequent patches of chillies, tomatoes and other vegetables. *Sarson* is the most paying crop exported from Bastar.

[1] The Hill Maria grows tobacco and a few poor chillies and tomatoes in little plots left clear of dab grasses when *penda* land is useless for grain.

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and its cultivation has spread among all lowland Gonds, who expect to pay their land revenue out of its proceeds.

Lastly there are the permanent rice lands, for wet cultivation. There are wide areas of permanently embanked and irrigated rice fields (*weda*), the use of which the Bison-horn Marias have learnt from their Hindu neighbours; more typical of them are the embankments of little hill-side watercourses into a series of descending little fields, which they call *jhorki weda*. The only fields which they consider can really be cultivated year after year, without resting fallow or the refreshment of wood ash or cow-dung ash, are the fields with good deep black soil; but too frequently the Maria has been elbowed out of such lands by the Hindu lessee of his village, or by Halba settlers. The other rice lands the Bison-horn Maria believes to become exhausted or 'develop sand' after two or three years' cultivation, and he then leaves them fallow for four or five years or more till they are covered with a thick growth of grasses and weeds, especially a grass he calls *chimmia*. The grass, although not burnt like forest in *erka* and *penda*, is looked upon by him in much the same way as a fertilizing agent to be ploughed into the soil; and so in a considerable degree even the cultivation of his *weda* rice fields must be regarded as shifting.

He ploughs these fallow lands up during the rains, unless, owing to their position, they are too wet to be ploughed till the end of the rains, and he repairs the embankments so that each field may retain ample water to rot the grass and weeds. At the end of the rains he gives them a second and more thorough ploughing, and leaves them alone all through the dry season. Just before the monsoon bursts he broadcasts rice seed, and then, when it has sprouted and there is adequate water in the fields, he follows the Chhattisgarhi practice of *biasi*; that is to say, he puddles up the field, young plants and all, by working all over it a flat log, on which he stands, yoked to a pair of oxen. When the land has been ploughed both before and at the end of the rains, the system is called *kohana*; where only the ploughing at the end of the rains has been possible, it is called *karhatti*. The second system is, of course, applied to all fields that have borne a crop just before being ploughed.

If it rains heavily before *kohana* and *karhatti* lands prepared in this way can be sown broadcast, they resort to the '*lai*' system. The seed is soaked in cold water and placed in baskets lined with the sacred *saja* leaves, filled with thick liquid cow manure, and covered over with *palas* (*Butea frondosa*) leaves; it is left thus for three or four days to sprout. The sprouted seed is washed out of the cow-dung with warm water, and is then sown broadcast. A

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to the shed where the animals killed in the second ritual hunt were kept and cut up, and there they are cooked along with the head, intestines and lower legs of those animals, and eaten by the men of the village.

This should be followed on the next Sunday by the *Jur-weta* for the whole *pargana* at the chief village of the *pargana*, the *perma* of that village acting as the officiant before the altar of bows and arrows erected in the name of the Forest-maidens, and the *perma* and elders of each village offering an egg and a tooth-stick to be placed by the officiating *perma* in the bran-heap of each of the three Forest-maidens. The *weta* is sometimes followed by worship of the clan-god and the *Pen-harsita* festival, except in villages where that takes place at the Mandai or Deogudi Jatra on or about the full moon day of Magh. It has already been said that the *Jur-weta* is now abandoned in most *parganas* because nearly all except small game has been exterminated. Actually, however, the photograph illustrating the sacrifice to the Forest-maidens, facing page 211, was taken at a *Jur-weta* and not at the *wijja-weta* of the preceding week.

It remains to state what each man does with the packet of consecrated seed which he takes back from the Wijja Pandum to his house. Before seed-time, he calls in a medium (*waddé*), through whom he consults the oracle as to the propitious day and hour for the field sowing ceremony. At the appointed time, taking care to be overlooked by no one, he takes to his field a sowing basket containing the consecrated seed mixed with other seed, a little cooked rice and a cock. In the field he clears a little plot of ground, spreads rice on it and, as soon as the cock starts to eat it, cuts its head off from the throat upwards in the name of the Earth-god, and sprinkles its blood on the ground and on the seed in the basket. He prepares a small piece of the field for sowing, and on it sows three handfuls of the blood-sprinkled seed. He then cooks and eats the body of the cock in the field, leaving the head there, and makes his way back to his house, still trying to avoid being seen. After this ceremony he is free to complete his sowing when he likes.

Hareli

Hareli is not observed by all Bison-horn Marias, but is universal among Parjas and Bhattras and the Jagdalpur Murias, and, under its common local name of Amavas, amongst Halbas and other Hindus of the State. The Dantewara and Barsur temples have spread its observance among the Bison-horn villages of Jagdalpur and Dantewara tahsils, and the villagers generally wait till the temples have celebrated the festival before celebrating it in their villages. On the morning of the day on which they have decided to hold it, the village elders assemble at the

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procession at Jagdalpur. The Dantewara temple observes several of the local *pandum*, if in a Hinduized form, while the ceremonies of the isolated Telanga villages now surrounded by a sea of Bison-horn Maria villages have become little different from those of the Bison-horn Marias. Hinduization there is, and has long been; but that alone does not account for the differences between the ritual of the Bison-horn Maria and that of the Hill Maria and his Muria neighbours. The physical differences between the two sections of Marias are slight, but their traditions are different, and at least it is clear that they represent different waves of migration. The remarkable differences of dancing, drumming, singing and ritual, and in the intonation, words and inflexions of their dialects, which make them mutually unintelligible, cannot be explained merely by saying that the Bison-horn Marias are 'more advanced' and more in contact with Hinduism and Telugu influences than the Hill Marias.

Note.

Mr. E. S. Hyde, I.C.S., has, since this book went to the press, kindly sent me a note of an interesting recent investigation by the police at Madder in Bhopalpatnam zamindari. A Mohammedan woman asleep on the night of June 13th, 1937 in her courtyard was slightly wounded with a knife or arrow over her right ribs, and woke to see what she believed to be two Marias running away. The police enquiry elicited information that many Marias in Kutru zamindari (i.e. Bison-horn Marias or Hill Marias of the plains in long contact with Dorla or Bison-horn influence; the true Hill Marias would not venture down to Madder), before sowing try to get some human blood, especially of women, to mix with their seed. Their usual method is to go to distant villages by night and inflict slight wounds on sleeping women with a knife or arrow. They then take the blood-stained weapon home, and wash it with water, in which they steep their rice seed before sowing, confident of securing thereby a bumper crop. Before wounding their victim they offer near her cot a little rice and turmeric; such an offering was found near the Madder woman's cot.

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would never be able to repay during his lifetime, and the debt would devolve on his sons. Another Maria from Irakdumme village had borrowed Rs. 20 bride-price from an Echli money-lender ten years before and had so far paid him paddy worth Rs. 22-8 as interest, but nothing towards principal, and had no idea what the final demand of his creditor would be. Another Maria from Batanfundi village had borrowed Rs. 12 from an Ahiri money-lender six or seven years ago and though he had repaid the principal was still being dunned for Rs. 40 worth of grain as interest, and was afraid that this high rate would now be doubled, as owing to the crop failure of 1939 he had been unable to repay any grain that year. 426 563

Throughout this area a crying need is an agency for advancing small seed-loans. The Government have seldom done this, on the theory that the zamindar should meet his tenants' needs; but we could not find one who had ever been given a seed-loan by the estate. The rates of interest extorted by the nests of money-lenders at Ahiri, Rajaram, Allapilli, Indaram, Echli and other centres are preposterous. The need for these seed-loans has been imposed on the Marias largely by the arbitrary stopping of their *podu* (*dahi*) shifting cultivation; *podu* fields always produced seed grain at least. Such is the pathetic honesty of the Marias that when the Debt Conciliation Board was working they readily acceded to the money-lenders' request to place their thumb-marks by the hundred on application after application begging the Board not to interfere between them and their money-lenders: it was only by persistent effort that the Board secured nearly 800 applications. In our camps the Maria elders opposed debt relief measures on the ground that if a man borrowed it was only right that he and his heirs after him should go on repaying. The final report of the Debt Conciliation Board of 1936 mentioned some fantastic cases. In one a Telugu Komti of Indaram had lent a Maria of Koreli a bullock on hire in 1920, at the usual fee of Rs. 4 worth of paddy. For twelve years the Maria went on paying Rs. 5 worth of paddy. In 1932 the Komti made out that the Maria still owed him Rs. 700 worth of paddy, and proceeded to show against him further compound interest of 50 per cent., until, when the Board took up the case, the Komti claimed as much as Rs. 2,320 worth of grain—all this for the hire of a single indifferent bullock. This, however, pales into insignificance against an Echli case of a money-lender lending Rs. 32 to finance a wedding a few years before, and in his accounts showing this debt, despite a repayment of Rs. 20, as having risen to Rs. 17,519!

At every halting place and camp the Marias' chief grievance, however, was not so much the exactions of money-lenders as the 241 735

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241 735 economic disaster caused by the arbitrary stopping of their *dahi*, *podu* or *jalapod* cultivation. They said that they did not need this for profit, but to save their lives. 'They urged that if *jalapod* were allowed in a reasonable manner they would always be able to produce enough corn even in years of deficient or irregular rainfall. The men said that in the former days of *jalapod* cultivation they usually cultivated a plot for two years and then left it for five or six years, within which short period *palas*[1] and other forest growth grew high enough for them to cut and burn again."[2]

177 291 Mirkal, Pirmeli and surrounding villages are within the orbit of Allapilli and Ahiri, and the average Maria was clearly exposed to Hindu culture contact, of which the outward sign was the wearing of coats and shorts purchased from Ahiri market or from itinerant Mahar pedlars.

342 The *District Gazetteer* records that the Maria house in the remoter parts of the zamindaris is occasionally very substantial, with walls formed of barked logs laid horizontally and kept in position by upright posts, the interstices being daubed with mud and the whole being thatched with jungle grass.[3] There still are many substantial huts in the villages between Allapilli and Lahiri, but I formed the impression that the standard of housing had deteriorated, possibly because of stricter regulation of felling of trees for domestic purposes.

273 656 [415] On the twenty-three miles drive from Pirmeli to Bhamragarh we passed several villages rich in toddy palms, and often saw Marias climbing the tree trunks by rough 'ladders' lashed to the trunks consisting of bamboo stems with the stumps of their side-shoots cut short to act as rungs. The climbers carry, slung round their waist and hanging down like tails, thick bamboo tubes to catch the tapped juice, as described on page 168, sometimes also they take up big gourd bottles. The Provincial Government has for a long time pursued a wiser excise policy in South Chanda than in other tribal areas, of allowing Marias free tree-tapping licences for domestic consumption in certain scheduled villages. The licences are valid for three years and the number of trees that may be tapped is restricted according to the population of the village and the number of trees available for tapping. This applies in much of the Maria country to the *caryotis urens* or sago-palm, the juice of which, as in Bastar, is much preferred to that of the ordinary toddy palm. This privilege had been accorded only to 239 villages of Sironcha tahsil and 58 of Garchiroli tahsil. The selection of villages had been somewhat eclectic; some large villages with only a small Maria or

[1] *Butea frondosa.*
[2] *The Aboriginal Problem*, p. 185.
[3] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 202.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Marias, Gonds, Marars, Mahras, Halbas, almost all communities were infected. At Jarawandi and in the villages of the Jharapapra and Aundhi zamindaris along the Bastar border many Maria and Halba villagers contrasted the Central Provinces Government's lack of care for them in Chanda and Drug districts with the anti-yaws and other public health work over the border in Bastar. It is of course only comparatively recently that doctors have recognized the existence of yaws as a distinct (and easily curable) disease which responds to treatment similar to the usual syphilis treatment; the *District Gazetteer*, for example, refers to the disease as 'a mild form of leprosy named "Gondi rog"'.[1]

Another thirteen miles of forest track, fairly easily negotiated by cars, brought us from Bhamragarh to the large village of Lahiri,[2] the headquarters of a *Sendhia's patti*, as mentioned at page 287. Lahiri lies at the foot of the Abujhmar Mountains, and beyond it no wheeled vehicles could proceed. Between Bhamragarh and Lahiri we saw several examples of the skilful *gatta* cultivation of the Marias, thus described in Lucie-Smith's 1869 Chanda Settlement Report:—

'In *gattas* the land above the dam is cultivated. To construct a *gatta*, a miniature valley with gently sloping sides, through which a stream flows, is chosen. The space between the banks of the stream is built up in the hot weather with trunks of trees, having their thinner end towards the point from which the current flows, and across these are fixed smaller logs and brushwood. The upstream face has thus a gentle slope to the front, while the rear face is almost perpendicular, and is sometimes strengthened by vertical stakes. The barricade is carried from four to eight feet above the level of the banks, and is then heaped with earth. As soon as the first rains have softened the ground, sods, about fifteen inches long by twelve broad and five thick, are dug with a heavy teak implement called a *katwa*, and with the sods wing embankments are built. These are run out in continuation of, and level with the log barricade, until the rise of the valley reduces their height to about a foot, when they are sloped off to the front and flanks; and pipes of *mohwa*, *ain* or *gougool* are put through. Similar *gattas* are constructed at convenient distances at other points of the stream, and if the situation be favourable, twenty of these *gattas* may be seen spanning the valley in regular series. Surplus water passes round the flanks of the *gatta*, and sometimes in floods, the stream tops the dams and cascades over. Rice is planted in the wet ground above the dam, and, where there is a succession of *gattas*, water, if required, is passed from a higher to a lower level through the wooden pipes in the embankment. Some of the *gattas* rise to twenty feet above the stream bed, and are very substantial structures, flooding large areas.'

This skill is slowly making its way among the Hill Marias, and the illustrations facing page 146 of this book of a Hill Maria dam at Tondawada in Bastar are really of a typical *gatta*, including the hollow tree-trunk pipe. That this traditional skill persists and has developed into a real irrigation technique has been shown by Rao

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 99.
[2] Spelt Lahir on *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A, ref. MV8455.

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241 312 Bahadur D. Lakshmanswamy in his 1922-4 Sironcha and Garchiroli Settlement Report, paragraph 31 :—

'Agriculture in parts of these zamindaris is as thorough as in the most advanced *khalsa* tracts. One has simply to look at the extensive rice fields and *gattas* of the Madias [*sic*] to admire the almost mathematical levelling of their field embankments. The Maria Gond has a genius for rice cultivation. He selects the best *silas* position area, and with an intuition for irrigation lays out his fields one below the other so as to utilise water from the field above to that lower down. A natural stream or spring of water is generally never allowed to go waste by him. He so embanks and diverts the supply by a system of well arranged water-channels as to utilise the whole supply for his rice area, however distant it may be. Even in the remotest part of the zamindaris agriculture has now developed beyond the domestic stage and assumed the commercial stage. The aboriginals constituting the greater part of the population of these zamindaris mostly live on the early rice, small millets and beans, while the heavy rice grown in the big *gattas* and embanked areas is exported to the markets.'

241 Now it should be noted that this means that for his own subsistence the Maria still relied on the grains and beans dear to his heart, and grown by *dahi* or *jalapod* cultivation, which had not then been stopped except in parts of Ahiri. The growth of heavy rice as a commercial crop is yet another sign of the transition from an economy in kind to a cash economy. Of this the money-lender takes full advantage.

241 426 563 For in these plains villages around Bhamragarh and Lahiri, besides Marias and Gonds there are nests of Teli exploiters, notably in the six villages of Lahiri, Mallampodur,[1] Kukurmeta,[2] Arawara,[3] Dodrai[4] and Idadapalli.[5] Many of these Teli money-lenders are now wealthy, as a result of small grain loans to the plains Marias and Gonds. The *modus operandi* is repayment indefinitely at rates of interest so high that the principal can never be repaid, while interest takes the form of a steady and heavy share of the debtors' harvest. Some of the Telis resort habitually to molestation of their debtors until the latter satisfy their yearly demand, but though molestation of debtors is now a cognizable offence under the Debtors' Protection Act, the police in their far distant police station at Etapalli never take action against molesting money-lenders. We have seen already on page 102 how these Telis' tentacles had spread to such Bastar villages as Nugor in Kutru Mar in the Indrawati valley, where there were big matting paddy bins in the main street in which all the rice seed of the village was stored on behalf of the Telis, who were free from time to time to remove all paddy from the bins surplus to the Marias' seed requirements, while each Maria villager was free to help himself to seed on the understanding that at harvest

[1] References on *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A :
1. MV7951
2. MV7854
3. MV7955
4 and 5. Not marked.

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he would repay with 50 per cent. interest.[1] Although it is clear that these Teli, Kalar and Telugu money-lenders do levy an exorbitant toll on the Maria villagers' produce, it is equally clear that they are fulfilling a necessary function, which has become the more necessary since the stopping of *podu* or *jalapod* cultivation below the hills has restricted the Marias in most villages to permanent rice cultivation on small acreages always dependent on seasonal rainfall evenly distributed in time. If such money-lenders are excluded, then they must be replaced by Government grain depots and village grain banks.

Of Maria funeral rites the *Gazetteer* observes that a stone or a carved post about five feet high is usually put up to mark the spot where a man's body has been cremated, and that 'sometimes one comes across a forest glade strewn with these memorials, the only sign of some deserted village, the very name of which has perished'.[2] Many rows of carved wooden posts may be seen between Bhamragarh and Lahiri, while at Lahiri itself I saw scores of such posts and of the small cromlechs (*hanal-garya* or 'thrones of the Departed') described on page 273, and mentioned in the *Gazetteer*[3] as built on the spot where the body was burned. The top of one of these very substantial funerary posts, or *hanal-gutta*, photographed at Lahiri, is reproduced as one of the illustrations in this Supplement. Noticeable are the carved wooden horns, between which is a carved wooden bird, probably a hornbill. The wooden horns are common, and probably are a modern symbol of the cow formerly sacrificed at the erection of a menhir or wooden *hanal-gutta* by Hill Marias[4] and Bison-horn Marias[5] throughout Bastar: the funerary customs of the Chanda Marias seemed, however, to be Hill Maria in type, and this was confirmed by oral enquiries at Lahiri.

The addiction of the Bison-horn Marias and of the Kutru Hill Marias of Bastar to cock-fighting has been described on page 162. I particularly inquired if the weekly cock-fights at Oikal in Ahiri zamindari, there mentioned, and at Lahiri itself still went on. But all cock-fighting among Chanda Marias had for some years been stopped under orders from an inexperienced young European District Superintendent of Police on the theory that it contravened the Gambling Act. But the Marias maintained that, as in Bastar, so here, there had never been cash betting (as, indeed, one might expect in a region where all transactions are still so largely in kind), but the defeated bird had passed to the owner of the winning bird.

[1] For further details, see *The Aboriginal Problem*, pp. 183-4.
[2] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 106.
[3] Ibidem, loc. cit.
[4] See pp. 278-9.
[5] See p. 281.

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174 natural than for the backward Marias aspiring to raise themselves to Raj-Gond status to copy gradually the Raj-Gond social organization? It is equally possible that *pari passu* the Raj-Gond ruler and nobles encouraged this: in all these semi-feudal, semi-tribal states and sub-states, as to this day in the States and zamindaris of Chhattisgarh and Orissa, the Maharajah of the State or the Rajah of the zamindari remains the final arbiter in caste matters, even often conferring the right to wear the sacred thread on communities actively hinduizing themselves. At Surjagarh and Jarawandi camps, various *Sendhias* and headmen practically admitted to me that god-grouping was not originally a Maria institution.[1]

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264 From Lahiri there was a long climb of thirteen miles to the Hill Maria village of Kuvakodi, when we halted for four days, including Christmas Day. The track led at first up the valley of the Lahiri river, then up the side valley of a small tributary, and so by an exceptionally steep ascent on to an undulating plateau, across which we reached Kuvakodi at dusk, our camp equipment all being carried on poles by Marias, whom on arrival we rewarded not only in cash but, in Bastar fashion, with salt and beads, and a feast of pork: the Marias sat ranged by clan and village, and those who killed and cooked the pork distributed to every man and child, and to the women of Kuvakodi, a portion of the meat off each joint of the pig. On the way up a slight detour took us through the small village of Gudumundi, and from Kuvakodi we visited Podewara and the Bastar village of Nelangari, some five miles from our camp.

751 Each day started with a parade of yaws patients for inoculation, all from Chanda villages: the Bastar Marias, who came in to see me and to join in the dancing each evening, looked tolerantly on, having themselves long before had the benefit of the Bastar anti-yaws parties.

241 The whole cultivation system of the Chanda Hill Marias is identical with the Bastar system described in Chapter VII of this book: it is, that is to say, *penda* cultivation and not what is generally known in the Central Provinces as *dahi*, or its Chanda plains variations of *khamori*, *jalapod*, *podu* or *sampod* (these terms will be explained later in this Note). There is the same broadcast sowing on the same kind of clearings of seed of all the minor millets and beans. The

[1] Haimendorf in reviewing Shamrao Hivale's *The Pardhans of the Upper Narbada Valley* has pointed out that the fact that the Pardhans' clan organization is everywhere based on that of the local Gond, does not disprove the different origin of the two peoples, for there are many examples of other tribes adopting their Gond neighbours' system of phratries and clans. He instances from Chanda district and Hyderabad State not only the aboriginal castes as certain Maratha blacksmiths and brass-workers who have the same clan names as the Gonds, *Man in India*, Vol. XXVI, 1946, p. 231. Compare also the Kuruk fishing tribe in Bastar, pp. 163-4.

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same ceremonies and festivals are observed in connexion with cutting and firing of the *penda*, sowing, harvesting and first eating of the new crops. Most of the reaping of the 'big *kosra*' crops had been completed, but that of the '*os kosra*' millets and pulses was still in progress. For many of the *penda* plots in the current *kaghai* cultivation clearing (see p. 107) this was the second and last year of cultivation, and the *kutki* crop raised was known as *hiwar*, a term, according to the *Gazetteer*,[1] always technically applied to these second year crops. I sent specimens of both *hiwar* and *kosra* or *kohala* (see p. 134) for identification to the Nagpur Agricultural College: botanically both were identical. These villages have never had the advantage of the special system of poll-tax assessment on every able-bodied axeman in the village which I devised for Bastar (p. 145). The system followed in these hill villages of Ahiri is roughly this. Each *penda* is cut by a number of villagers with the approval of the *gaita*, and the portion cut by each of them is roughly marked by one or other of the methods indicated on page 131. Help is taken from other villagers, who are always ready to give this mutual aid, and at harvest the produce is divided among the different share-holders of the *penda*, with something also for all who helped to clear the *penda*; sometimes a number of plots are specially earmarked for division of the produce by the *gaita* and elders amongst all who joined in clearing the whole *kaghai* and in watching and fencing the crops; a part of the produce is also allocated to villagers too old and feeble to work. The zamindar's *kamdar* or agent is paid rent, usually in kind, by the *gaita* for the whole village, for paying which the *gaita* takes a share of the produce of each *penda* plot. The village cultivation is in fact a truly co-operative enterprise.

I have alluded above to the arbitrary stopping in the plains Maria villages of the Chanda zamindaris of *dahi* cultivation, and the consequent increase of debt among the Marias. This Kuvakodi hill tract is fortunate, however, in having escaped this prohibition; it is the only Ahiri area where *penda* reigns undisturbed. It was therefore no surprise to find not a single case of old debt among the fifty or sixty Hill Maria cultivators who assembled at my camp from Kuvakodi and the other hill villages. Occasionally when crops are poor and the *kamdar* has to be paid rent in cash, the *gaita* goes to a Teli money-lender in the plains to borrow the money. But the villagers look on this as the debt of the whole village, not of the *gaita*, and though the Teli is as unscrupulous here as in any plains village in exacting high interest, yet the combined villagers are usually able to repay in kind in a year or two. Nowadays sometimes not only they, but even their Bastar neighbours, instead of resorting

[1] *Chanda Districts Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 170.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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241 426 621 to the Telis, send relays of young men to earn the needed cash by working at Allapilli, and it is noteworthy that these workers do not regard the wages thus earned as their individual property, but as the earnings of the village which sent them there and provided them with food for the journey. Let us hope that the economic self-sufficiency which has hitherto kept these hillmen out of the clutches of the money-lender will be preserved (which means that their *penda* must not be stopped). They are subject, however, to three pests. The 661 first is the frequently corrupt *kamdar* of the zamindar. The second are the village watchmen or *kotwar*, generally of Mahra or kindred untouchable castes, to whose circles these hill villages are attached. These Mahras have their headquarters in plain villages, whence they make periodic tours of the hill villages to levy various illegal dues from the Hill Marias. The third pest is the itinerant 439 cloth pedlar, usually a Mahra, who supplies cloth on credit and then tries to levy a perpetual tribute in kind. I met one of these men in this tour during my visit to the adjacent Bastar village of Nelanguri. Bazaars are so remote that these pedlars, if they could be prevented from selling on credit, and be made to charge reasonable prices, would fulfil a useful function. All these abuses could be checked by effective official touring: Mr. Kerawala's and my visits were unfortunately red-letter events in the Marias' lives.

535 292 Dancing at Kuvakodi was all in the traditional Hill Maria style, but sadly inferior to dances at such Bastar centres as Orcha or Handawada, although at least half the dancers were Bastar Marias. But even in physical type these Marias from the western fringes of the Abujhmar Mountains are inferior. Here, as I noted of Bastar during my March 1934 visit, the Maria dancer has given up the rib-dress or *gatikarhana*, the dancing-shield and the gay head-dress and skirt, though he still retains the traditional buttock-bells, the songs, the *pata-bhita* or 'song fellows' and the dance-steps.[1]

535 The descent back to the Lahiri camp was almost more tiring than the climb had been. Lahiri that evening was full of an eager crowd, to watch the dancing and partake of the liquor that was ready for the dancers. Here the dancing was lively and vital, but differed 534 in various ways from Hill Maria dancing, if of Hill Maria type. The *dol* drumming was marked, even though the single-membrane *turam* drum more typical of the Hill Maria was much in evidence. 301 Perhaps, however, the strongest impression was the astonishing wealth of 'jewellery' worn by the girls: enquiry showed that apart from strings of beads, almost all the silver and brass and aluminium necklets, armlets and other trinkets worn by the women had been purchased from metal-workers in Bastar State. There seemed here

[1] See pp. 75-6 and 183-4

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712 has now disappeared. The gates of the fort are lying on the top, and there is a stone platform, on which are images of horses and elephants sacred to the presiding deity, Thakur Deo. Previous to the Gond conquest Surjagarh was a noted Mana fortress, and about the end of the 17th century was occupied by two famous chieftains, Sādho Vuria and Mula Vuria, who rebelled against the Chanda king, Ram Shah, and, secure in their strong fortresses, harried the low lands with impunity. At length Ram Shah granted the tract to a relative named Kokshah, who after some years of desultory warfare stormed the hill and put the insurgent leaders to the sword. Kokshah then made Surjagarh his citadel, and under its shadow his descendants, the present Ahiri family, have extended their possession, east and west, and south and north, until nearly 3,000 miles of country own them masters. The scenery of these hills is very wild, and the black glittering mass of Surjagarh, streaked here and there with patches of bright green and red, stands out grandly against the sky. The upper cliffs have a beautiful shrub, with dark green leaves and clusters of lovely blue flowers.'

There were still 38,650 Manas in Chanda district in 1931, and Thakur Deo on the summit of Surjagarh remains their tutelary deity. Also named after them is the fortress of Manikgarh in the Rajura taluq of Adilabad district. Russell and Hiralal[1] speak of them as a Dravidian caste of cultivators and labourers, possibly an offshoot of the Gonds, and associated in the popular mind with Gonds and Gowaris. They are now completely Hinduized, and have generally adopted Maratha customs. The Thakur Deo platform on the Surjagarh summit had a wealth of clay images, mostly horses, in type precisely similar to the horse images associated with Aiyyenar in South India.

137 If you stand on the summit, in whatever direction you look, north, south, east or west, all the Sironcha and Garchiroli tahsils and the Abujhmar Mountains of Bastar still seem to be one vast forest, with only occasional small yellow patches indicating village sites and cultivation. Speaking of the Chanda Marias' shifting cultivation ●241 (*podu*) Lucie-Smith wrote in 1869[2] :—

'For the vast wilderness east of the Wyngunga it is the very best that could be devised. By it, year by year, more and more land is cleared of forest and made ready for the plough, and thus every Maria village has around it a very much larger area of open ground than would be the case if the plough only were used. No one who has passed through these great wastes, shut in by lofty trees and dense masses of bamboo, and seeing, sometimes for days, not a trace of human habitation, can fail to rejoice at the work fire and axe are doing. It is of course important to prevent the destruction of forest containing valuable timber, and to arrange for reserves of jungle wood, grass and bamboos near the cultivated tracts, but, this done, *dahi* cultivation should be encouraged. It would be idle to speculate upon the changes in temperature and in rainfall the clearance of the forests would entail, for even if the population increase to the full, and coal mines, railways and river navigation bring all the prosperity we hope they will, yet in all human probability the youngest teak seedling now springing into life will have grown old and withered to dust before the eastern wilderness shall have sensibly decreased.'

[1] Vol IV, p. 172, *et seq.*
[2] Loc. cit. para. 232.

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Railways have still, eighty years later, not penetrated the wilderness: the river navigation schemes proved a failure: the coal mines are well to the west. The prophecy has thus been fulfilled, but with a difference: the clearings are fewer and farther between than in Lucie-Smith's day owing to the virtual cessation in Chanda, except around Kuvakodi, of *podu* or *dahi*.[1]

His wise and discriminating approval of *podu* was overlooked soon after the 1922-4 land revenue settlement of the zamindaris in Ahiri and the Garchiroli zamindaris, when, without apparently any order from Government, the local authorities stopped *podu*. The *Settlement Report* had only said that the miscellaneous income received by the zamindars from *jalapod* had under standing orders been omitted from the assets on which land revenue was to be assessed, so that in case it damaged the forests, Government interference might be justified. In every Garchiroli zamindari except Gewardha *jalapod* had gone on until the 1922-4 settlement, but the total area had been found to be only 993 acres. Rao Bahadur Lakshmanswamy, the Settlement Officer, reported that it was never allowed in good quality timber forests, but only where there was a sparse unmarketable forest growth; even then there was a ten years rest between successive fellings and burnings. The rent on each clearing was recovered in grain and not in cash, the quantity per axe varying from 60 lb. in Kotgal zamindari to 200 lb. in Rangi zamindari: the rent was always substantially less for the second than for the first year of a clearing. The Settlement Officer considered that the privilege of carrying on this shifting cultivation contributed indirectly to the expansion of settled cultivation, and believed that the withdrawal of the privilege would probably unsettle the present occupants: he urged therefore no interference; the area was small, the forest valueless, the privilege kept the Marias happy, and the zamindars, alive to the increasing value of their forests since the advent of the railway and road communications, were sufficiently alive to the need of restricting *podu* and charged higher rates for it in the areas nearer the open parts of the district and the railway than in the remote zamindaris.

[1] This has been mentioned already in this Note on pp. 390-1 and 397. *Podu* strictly speaking is the *dippa* or *marhan* of the Hill Marias (p. 126), while *jala* or *khamori*, which is really the *dahi* of most of the province and the *parka* of the Bastar Marias, consists in the sowing of rice on low-lying plots where water naturally collects in the rains, after these plots, which generally have no forest growth, have been fertilised in May with the ashes of grass and wood cut beforehand from the adjacent forests and spread over them. On the *podu* plots, light rice, all the minor millets and beans and pulses are sown. When *mandia* (*eleusine coracana*) is sown, the cultivation is known as *samped*. As general terms in Chanda either *podu* or *jalapod* are used. *Podu* is also the common term in Hyderabad State.

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In Ahiri zamindari *podu* had been stopped even earlier. In 1917 the then Deputy Commissioner inaugurated an active policy of discouraging it in favour of plough cultivation. He decided to allow no *podu* outside village areas, to make each village *gaita* responsible for reporting the name of each *podu* cultivator and the area, as measured by bamboos, cut and sown by him, and to charge rent at the same rate for *podu* as for plough land. Failure to report any cultivation contravening the orders was to be punished in the first instance by a heavy penal rent, and, if repeated, by total prohibition of all *podu* in the village at fault. This drastic restriction was introduced in all the zamindari except the Kuvakodi Hill Maria tract. The proposals were expounded by the Deputy Commissioner at the end of his tour to several hundred *gaitas* assembled for the purpose at Ahiri. This thoughtlessly wide-sweeping measure soon led to the universal cessation of *podu*: the orders gave great scope to minor zamindari officials for harassing the Marias by alleging that their *podu* contravened the restrictions, and in the end it seemed safer to have no *podu* at all. It seems also that ultimately some Deputy Commissioner finally prohibited *podu*, though the order had disappeared when his successor looked for it in 1930.

In all my camps, especially near the Bastar border, across which *podu* is permissible in every village, the bitter complaints of every Maria showed how harshly this had operated: we have already seen how it has delivered them to the tender mercies of the money-lenders. That, moreover, Rao Bahadur Lakshmanswamy's warning that such interference would unsettle the present occupants had been justified, was proved by the widespread migration of Marias to their kinsmen's villages over the Bastar border, with their greater freedom; of this several *gaitas* and zamindars complained, notably in Jharapapra zamindari. I had a conference with the Garchiroli and Drug zamindars at Murumgaon later in the tour, on New Year's Day, 1941. Several of them complained that in the past the district officers had fined them for allowing *jalapod*, and, yet worse, that they were still often being fined for alleged felling, without the Deputy Commissioner's permission, of high tree forest whenever their ryots broke up new lands even for plough cultivation; the ryots then always burn the felled forest growth and raise the first crops on the new land by the traditional method, but officials stigmatize this as *podu*. The zamindars considered that the stopping of *jalapod* had been quite unjustified, and that if it were again allowed, but confined to commercially worthless miscellaneous forest from which at present they derived no income, it would at least bring in something to them, and above all would save the Marias from the effects

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of rice failures such as those of 1939 and 1940. In the former year the Marias, dismayed by the failure of rice on their plough-lands, took the law into their own hands and started cutting *podu* in the east of Garchiroli tahsil and the adjacent Partially Excluded Areas of Drug district, being to some extent incited by emissaries of the leader of an agrarian agitation in the Dondi-Lohara zamindari. It seemed to me that in their present mood they would before long again defy the restrictions and cut *podu* on a wide scale.

I recommended accordingly that their wishes should be met, as it should not be difficult to regulate *podu* by fixing a regular series of sites to be felled in two-yearly rotations. Silviculturally too there was much to be gained by this. When *podu* was first restricted and then prohibited, the miscellaneous forests were allowed to grow up just as they had been left after the last *podu* fellings, with all the old high stumps and crooked or double or treble stems. Even the patches of teak were often useless because the trees had been left to shoot from old undressed stumps. Most of this vast forest around Bhamragarh, Surjagarh and Jarawandi has no commercial value at all, and never will have unless good teak can be grown. In the neighbouring Panabaras zamindari of Drug I found that some forty years before the Court of Wards had initiated a practice of requiring *podu* cultivators to sow teak seed in the *podu* clearings before abandoning them. This did much to produce the fine forest that is now so valuable an asset of that estate. The Marias whom I met in Ahiri, Jharapapra, Aundi, Koracha, Murumgaon, Rangi and Dhanora zamindaris were most appreciative of the idea of *podu* being allowed with this condition of the sowing of teak seed in the second and last year of cultivation. All knew how the Allapilli departmental forest operation had saved the local Marias from economic ruin, and they were quick to realize that conservation of the surviving teak and the growth of teak in areas now to be selected for that purpose and sown with teak at the end of *podu* cultivation would bring teak forests, and therefore ultimately operations such as those at Allapilli, far nearer to their villages in the days of their grandchildren. Besides areas thus earmarked for teak regeneration after *podu*, there should also be fixed areas around each village where *podu* should be allowed indefinitely. The Marias also would welcome the extension to other parts of Ahiri and the other zamindaris of the precedent of the leasing by Government from the Ahiri zamindar of the forests around Allapilli: the surviving teak areas around Surajgarh would for example be suitable leased areas. In all these measures the fullest co-operation of the Marias could without much difficulty be obtained by enlisting the sympathy and support of the *bhumias*, *gaitas*, and *Sendhias*, whose authority remains real and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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unchallenged. I emphasize the word sympathy: the method of threatening and punishing the headmen must be given up, and every effort made to win their understanding support for the new measures and even to entrust them with their execution.

The walks and talks at Surjagarh delayed the start on the 32 miles journey to Jawarwandi, and the car and lorry were more than once bogged on the way, so that once again we arrived in camp long after dark. It was on this journey that we crossed the tongues of Bastar territory mentioned on page 378 of this Note: in the southern tongue, in fact, we were bogged for an hour or more, but, as in Bastar, were readily helped to extricate ourselves. I noticed and stopped in *gotul* or bachelors' dormitories in several villages before and after Surjagarh. Many of these are treated by touring officers as though they were rest-huts built for their special convenience, like the *chauri* of Hyderabad or Berar villages. They use them also for posting up legal notices, and in two I found nailed to the wooden posts copies of the *Yudda Samachar* or War News in the Marathi edition published by the provincial War Purposes Fund for dissemination of accurate war information in all villages; this showed singular lack of inteliigence on the part of those who controlled such propaganda in Chanda district, for in these Maria villages not a person was literate and very few could speak Marathi. The *gotul* culture here must be similar to that among the Murias just across the Bastar border in North Antagarh, but in the short time available I did not overcome the Marias' natural reluctance to discuss this intimate social organization, a reluctance heightened, I suspect, by the fact that here on the fringes of the *gotul* country the institution is the butt of Hindu ridicule or prurient curiosity. But there certainly are *gotul* in these villages, at least for the youths, and I found one, with some difficulty owing to the reticence of the local Marias in these mixed villages, at Erka in Rangi zamindari. So far as I could make out, they are still to be found in the Partially Excluded zamindaris of Drug.

Jarawandi is the headquarters of a sub-zamindar holding under Ahiri a taluq of twenty-three villages: the rival claims of Ahiri and Jarawandi to the seignorial dues have been a nuisance to the local Marias. Here there was a large gathering of headmen and *Sendhias* of *patti* groups of villages. Enquiries from them and later at Murumgaon showed that the *panchayat* system described in the extract on pages 286-8 of this book is not only as vigorous as ever, but is more widespread than previously recorded, there being *Sendhias* in almost every Chanda zamindari. It had been stated to me that the zamindars outside Ahiri had usurped the authority of the *Sendhia* and his *patti panchayat*, but I doubt the truth of this, and

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The Court of Wards finally gave the lease to a Hindu of the Kurmi caste, on a premium of Rs. 211. The present lessee, his son, was made protected in 1923. Though the aboriginals as a whole have not actually lost land since 1902, the lessee had been very oppressive, forcing the aboriginals who borrowed from him to surrender their fields to him and then selling them to new tenants.

In Panabaras the departmental working of the five teak forests, largely built up, as already stated, by the Court of Wards insisting from 1900 onwards on *podu* cultivators sowing teak-seed on their plots in the second year of cultivation, has done something on Allapilli lines to bring economic relief to the local aboriginals. These four estates have been special targets for the agrarian agitation already mentioned, which started from the adjacent non-excluded Dondi-Lohara zamindari and made a special feature of inciting the Gonds and Marias to burn *podu*.

In the Garchiroli zamindaris on the whole the Marias and other aboriginals continue to hold their own and to take gradually to permanent cultivation, though far more slowly than outsiders: in the twenty years after the 1922-3 settlement aboriginal cultivation had increased by only 23 per cent., but non-aboriginal by 50 per cent., there being 6,523 aboriginal tenants of 76,113 acres against 4,012 other tenants of 46,863 acres. The aboriginals still have miles and miles of land available for extending their cultivation, but always hanker after their beloved *podu*.

This *podu* question, as I have already said, was the principal topic at the conference of the Drug and Chanda Partially Excluded Areas zamindars at Murumgaon on New Year's Day, 1940. Other topics were the neglect of the Garchiroli zamindaris by the Chanda District Council, and the future of the zamindars, in view of the political threat to the whole zamindari system. To deal first with the last topic, let me say that while there may be much to be said for 'liquidation' of big landed estates, especially of absentee proprietors, the policy towards aboriginal zamindars should be different. Most of them are descendants of long lines of tribal chieftains holding estates on very ancient tenures dating back to the semi-tribal, semi-feudal systems[1] under which most of middle India was organized centuries ago. Properly speaking these chiefs in relation to their ryots and fellow tribesmen are *primi inter pares*. Some of the wealthier aboriginal proprietors of the huge Chhattisgarh estates may have aped the princeling: but most of the Chanda zamindars are closely akin to their people—the Rangi chief, for example, is frankly a Maria among Marias—and do their utmost to protect their ryots. Legally, so long as the proprietary rights in any

[1] See p. 4.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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the later waves of Gonds and Raj-Gonds which set up the kingdom of the Gond Maharajas of Chanda. It would be very interesting also to see whether anything survives of the peculiarly Hill Maria and Muria cult of the clan-god as distinct from the more developed religious system of the Raj-Gonds; with its wonderful foundation of myth, the full richness and religious and cultural significance of which the world will begin to realize when Haimendorf's epoch-making book on the Raj-Gonds of Adilabad is published in the near future, and when it is followed up by similar detailed investigation of Gond life and custom in all parts of Gondwana. How far there is any common mythological basis of Raj-Gond and Maria culture would be a factor of great significance. I am conscious that the weakest side of this book has been its failure to probe into the mythology and folk-songs of the Bastar Marias. I do not believe Hill Maria culture to be nearly as rich in that respect as Muria culture is shown to be by Verrier Elwin's book, *The Muria and their Ghotul*. Yet there must be more to be said of the folk-tales and mythology of the Marias of Bastar than has appeared in the first edition of this book; indeed the second section of Elwin's Comment in this edition gives some indication of the wealth of Maria myth awaiting record in Bastar.

Another question clearly needing investigation is the extent to which the *gotul* as an institution is a real factor in Chanda Maria life. I have implied in this Note that it survives, but is gradually being relegated into obscurity as a result of the impact of Hindu ideas and of Hindu ridicule. That would, however, apply more in the northern zamindaris than in the country along the Bastar border from the River Indrawati north to Jharapapra. This part of Ahiri zamindari is landlocked and largely protected from the influx of Hindu ideas save in so far as these are brought in by zamindari and government subordinates. The fact moreover that the *Sendhia* and *patti panchayat* organization is still vigorous in Ahiri zamindari should be an indication that there has been no psychological inhibition on these Marias preserving their tribal life and cultural inheritance unimpaired. It would be interesting, however, to trace the outer boundaries of the *gotul* system and to see what has happened to it, when, and why, in these outer fringes.

This Note is stronger in its picture of economic conditions. Here the most significant fact has been the banning of *jalapod* or shifting cultivation during and after the Great War of 1914-18. One would like, given the time and opportunity, to get at the psychological reaction of the Maria to this as expressed in his folk-songs; one would like also to be able to go through the records of criminal

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and civil litigation in which Maria parties have been involved since this interference with their way of life, and to see also if it has had any bearing on suicide. Quite clearly, however, it has had a tremendous and adverse effect on their economics. It has accentuated their transition from an economy in kind to a cash economy and, by virtually forcing them to grow rice, a commercial food crop, as their principal crop, it has played into the hands of the *bania* and the money-lender who naturally desire to buy up rice for export. It may be suspected also that this has had an adverse effect on the diet and physique of the Maria. The small millets, which are the characteristic and favourite food of the Marias and were best grown in the *podu* clearings, are dietetically of higher value than rice. Their market value was small, but so long as the Marias' granary had ample stores of these millets, he had not to depend upon the money-lender for seed or cattle, nor to bother about marketing his produce. The only partial remedy so far provided for the economic ills caused by the stopping of *podu* has been the departmental forest work at Allapilli. Here the Maria, doing work of a type for which his life in the forest suits him and receiving fair and prompt cash payment for his labour, has been able to earn money which could keep him out of the clutches of the money-lender and the bribe-taker. But this too has had its detribalizing effect, accustoming him to working far from his home village and in close contact with an alien civilization and culture.

The next difficulties that the Maria has to solve in assimilating himself to the life of modern India are the problems resulting from the impact of political India with its steady tendency to seek to reduce all things and all institutions throughout India to a drab uniformity. There is no doubt that the Maria is not ready to exercise the vote. It is equally clear that he has his own vigorous tribal organization and that his *patti panchayat* could easily be entrusted with the same powers that have been given to the village and *pargana panchayats* in Bastar. It seems obvious also that on these *panchayats* could be based some sort of system whereby Marias could handle the problems of local self-government in their country. These *panchayats*, for example, if entrusted with the selection of local Marias for a zamindari *panchayat*, could produce a body in real touch with tribal life in all its facets. Tribal village life is still naturally co-operative, even though in the plains individualism is now stronger than in the largely collective villages of the Hills. In fact the whole *podu* system was an incentive to the co-operation of all the villagers; rice cultivation, in contrast, drives villagers into individualism and ideas of private property as indeed does the whole land revenue system which has been

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Little boys practise the bison-horn dance with head-dresses made of bamboo rings which have bamboo 'horns' sticking up in front and at the back a spike ornamented with feathers. They beat their stomachs or use bits of wood instead of drums.

Page 189, *line* 31. But I found everywhere that both kinds of Marias were also accustomed to use the fire-drill. The fire-saw of the Hill Marias can easily be worked by two men; there is no difference between it and the Baiga or Juang saw, which is always handled by two persons.

When Bison-horn Marias go to fire their clearings, they should as far as possible approach them with their faces towards the east. The Perma and Gaita break two small branches, the Perma a dry and the Gaita a green or 'living' branch, and drive them into the ground. They light these with a burning log from the Hearth of the Departed in one or other of their houses. If both branches burn well, it is a sign that the clearing also will burn properly; but if one burns and the other does not, it means that the clearing will only burn in patches and will thus be insufficiently manured. Special offerings must then be made.

Page 225, *line* 9; *page* 278, *line* 25. In one village—but only one—at Mokhpal, I found scepticism about the tradition that the menhirs grow in size. Here the Bison-horn Marias laughed at the idea and said that, if—for example—a stone grew smaller, it was probably because the ground was damp and it sank down.

Page 225, *line* 11. The Bison-horn Marias believe that the Dead are reborn, if at all, in their own homes; they generally deny that they ever reappear as animals. Yet an animal may be born in, or have a powerful influence over, a human being. A girl at Mokhpal was born with the left side of her face covered with a sort of fur; the Marias said that an ancestor who was killed by a bear had been reborn in the child. As a result the wearing of dancing-masks covered with bear-fur has been abandoned, for fear that the wearers should be affected in some future birth. A man killed by a tiger may reappear in one of his descendants with marks of the claws on the neck. It may be that to people who live so near to nature rebirth in animal form does not seem specially distasteful. Marias and Murias live close to their animals and love them. At Lakhopal there is a small menhir in memory of a faithful dog.

Page 227, *line* 12. In 1939, Soma Ganda-Maria of Gomagal killed a man, who had seduced his wife, in the most brutal manner by squeezing his testicles till they burst. He then seized his penis saying, 'It was with this that you copulated with my wife,' and tore the skin from it. Finally he throttled him. Anyone who

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Bison-horn Maria girl looks a married on a bison-skull at shrine

[End Plate N]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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511 prosperous than their fellows in a district like Mandla. In Mandla, for example, or Bilaspur, the worst poverty is the poverty of the spirit, the decay of art and culture, the disappearance of tribal religion, the dying-out of dance and song. Against this background, material want stands out stark and bare. But the Muria of Bastar has a full rich life; every day brings its delightful and absorbing pursuits; at least twice a month there is a sharp break in the monotony, the colour and music of a festival, the excitement of a hunt, the romance of a dancing expedition—and all the time, if you are young, there is the ghotul which you would not exchange for any offer of material wealth.

II. Cultivation

241 'It is as bad for a Muria to fail in his cultivation as for a monkey to slip from a branch,' but it is not necessary to spend very much time on this subject, important as it is. The axe-cultivation of the Maria, which closely resembles that of the Muria, has been fully discussed by Grigson,[1] and for its wider implications my own account of bewar in *The Baiga* may be consulted.[2] The Muria's permanent rice-cultivation hardly differs from that elsewhere in India and need not be described in detail.

For the sake of completeness, however, and because we must never forget that the ghotul exists in a setting of agriculture, food-gathering and hunting, I will give a brief outline of the Muria's methods of cultivation.

There are three kinds of axe-cultivation and the Muria practise them all, for 'the axe is our milk-giving cow':

1. *Penda* is cut on the steep slopes of hills. The Muria fells the trees and undergrowth, fires them when dry, and sows his seed in the ashes after the first rains have fallen. In a *penda* clearing there is no digging or ploughing of the earth. After two or three years a *penda* plot is abandoned and a new clearing made. This is the most common form of axe-cultivation among the Hill Maria: it is the bewar of the Baiga. No plough or hoe is used. For beans and pulses, holes are dibbled with a primitive digging-stick.

2. *Dippa*, also called *markân* and *erka*, differs from *penda* in three ways—

   (*a*) The clearings are made on fairly level ground, not on the side of hills.

   (*b*) After the fellings have been fired the ashes are evenly distributed over the whole area; in a *penda* clearing no one bothers to do this. The result is a much more even and regular crop.

   (*c*) When the rains fall, the ashes are ploughed into the ground, or dug into it with a hoe, and only then is the seed sown.

3. *Parka* or *dahi* differs again: in *dippa* and *penda* clearings, the trees are felled in the very place where it is desired to sow. They are burnt on the spot. But in *parka*, trees and brushwood are cut elsewhere and are carried on to an already existing field. Here they are spread over the field and fired. After raking the ashes evenly over the field, the Muria plough them into the ground and sow their seed.

[1] Grigson, *op. cit.*, pp. 125–30.
[2] Verrier Elwin, *The Baiga* (London, 1939), pp. 100–31.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

Penda is not common among the Muria; it is practised only by those living in the hilly country near the Raughat and in the Abujhmar foothills of the south. *Dippa* and *parka* are the special Muria methods. They are, of course, transitional forms of cultivation from the very primitive *penda* to ordinary plough-agriculture, for they require the use of cattle.

In a *dippa* clearing the trees and bushes are cut in February after the Kare Pandum, when Tallur Muttai is offered a hollow bamboo split down the middle, before which cutting is taboo. The wood is spread over the clearing and left to dry. For *parka*, the wood is cut elsewhere and carried to the field in a shouldered carrying-pole called *asur* or *bhārni*; it is thrown onto the ground and spread fairly evenly across the field.

Before cutting the first *parka*, the Kaser-Gaita spends the night with all the men of the village in the ghotul to ensure that none of them approach their wives who, as menstruating creatures, are always potentially dangerous. He himself cooks and eats apart. In the morning they go to the village shrine and offer sacrifice to all the deities connected with the village, especially remembering Mother Earth and the Departed, saying, 'Let the harvest be good, and let no ill befall us'.

The Gaita then cooks the head of the goat or pig that was sacrificed before the shrine, and small portions are distributed. He sends the chelik to cut the wood. As they first swing their axes they cry *Kiddari pude*—referring to the genitals of the well-omened kiddari bird. The villagers bring burnt rice, soot from the bottom of their cooking-pots, water and gourds. When the wood has been cut the Gaita says, 'Give the chelik some food', and the villagers smear the boys' faces with soot and force a little burnt rice into their mouths.

All are now free to cut the wood for their fields. From this point we may treat the two types of cultivation together. Indeed *dippa* often shades off into *parka*, for where there are not enough trees in a *dippa* clearing, a supplementary supply has to be cut elsewhere and brought as for *parka*.

FIG. 1. Kunj digging-stick of iron *Length 1' 7"*

In some villages there is a ceremonial burning of a small patch of *parka* at the time of the Wijja Pandum; I describe this in detail in Chapter XXIV. In other places, the ritual of the first firing is done at the time just before the rains. The Kaser-Gaita sleeps as usual in the ghotul and then goes with the chelik to his own field. He offers liquor to the local gods, and starts the burning with a smouldering bit of paddy rope taken from the ghotul fire.[1] The other villagers come and all light their own fires from this.

To spread the ashes evenly over the field, the Muria use a long rake called the *korlat* or *balla* (*dhosna* in Halbi). This is simply a very long pole with a board attached to the end. It is, in Muria riddle, 'the snake that wriggles all over the field'. They wear *harpunj* sandals of sambhar hide or wooden shoes called *hatwak* to protect their feet from the hot ground, none the less bearable for the burning sun at the hottest time of the year. The urine turns dark and burns and for a few days the whole tribe endures a sort of urethritis. 'The town people suffer for sex, but we for our field-work', as a man at Phulpar explained.

[1] The Juang keep a fire burning night and day in their *mandapwk* dormitory, and usually ignite their clearings from it.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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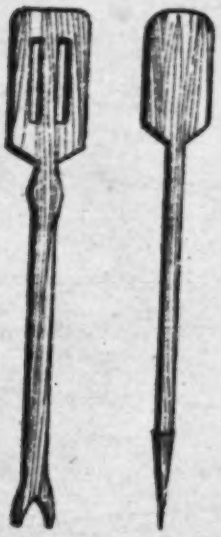
●241 When this is done and the ground is cooled, the bullocks are brought and chelik and motiari with their ploughs drive the ashes deep into the soil.

The plough is 'the lizard that runs into its hole in the dry tree': it has 'three heads and ten legs': the cowhide reins of the oxen are described as 'the dead bullocks that go before a living man'.

[796] Before the seed can be sown, the Wijja Pandum must be celebrated. This festival, which is preceded by a ceremonial hunt, is held at any time from April to June. Essential to the festival, one version of which I [787] describe in detail in Chapter VII, is the hunt which foretells the success or failure of the crops, the feast on the animals killed, and the sprinkling of sacrificial blood on the seed—some of which is taken away by every householder. In some villages, at the end of the ceremonies, the chelik roll the Gaita in mud from an ant-hill.

The night before the actual sowing, which is sometimes fixed when new leaf-shoots appear on the bhoir tree, all the men again sleep in the ghotul and the motiari stay at home to ensure chastity and thus avoid any possible infection of menstrual blood. On their way to the fields in the morning, they put a small heap of seed at any cross-roads they pass. Each householder has a leaf-cup of the seed that was consecrated with blood at the Wijja Pandum, and sows this after the Gaita has sacrificed a chicken in his field.



417 FIG. 2. *Dayi* wooden spoons for stirring food while cooking. *Length 2' 9"*

The Muria, unlike the Hill Maria, sows different kinds of seed in different places, but like the Hill Maria he sows them at different times. In the west and central areas there are three main sowings.

The first sowing, immediately after the first rains, is of small millets—*turo kohala* or *kosra*, *hikma* and *mandia*. *Rahar dāl* is sown with the *mandia*. Gourds and pumpkins are sown at the same time.

The next sowing is in early July of rice, *kuthi* and *urad dāl* as well as beans.

The last sowing, of what is called *os kosra*, is done in August, though not on ground that has already been used that year. Rice is again sown and *mung* and *kulthi* pulses.

Before the actual sowing of the seed, the Muria prepare their fences, and the field-huts and watching-platforms for the guarding of their crops. The fences are not, of course, as in civilized areas, to keep out their fellow-men but to protect the crops against wild animals: bison and deer are plentiful in north Bastar, especially in the Makri area, and can do much damage to the fields.

There are many kinds of fencing. Sometimes there is none at all; in the jungle clearings a line of poles is enough, in the permanent fields the embankments make a clear division. Sometimes a strong *gannao* stockade is made by placing hundreds of logs upright in the ground. Fences of bamboo wattle are also made.

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THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

The Field-houses

In many places, regular field-houses (*kotul*) are built with proper roofs and even walls. For long periods the whole family goes to live in these; there is no taboo on women, even on menstruating women, provided they do not enter the fields in this condition. Here the family cooks, works and lives.

But women are not permitted to go to the *tondi*. These little platforms, raised ten or twelve feet above the ground on poles—'the four brothers have one top-knot'[1]—are generally roofed, and furnished with a mat, a pot for fire, some firewood. The only two places where a Muria boy sleeps regularly are the ghotul and the *tondi*. During the season when the crops are ripening, the ghotul are almost deserted by the chelik who are all on duty in the fields. The rule against their taking a motiari with them is not due to the fear that she may distract their attention from their duties—Muria girls are not accustomed to do that—but because of the danger of her beginning her menstrual period on the platform and so ruining the crops. But it is, of course, very necessary for the chelik to keep awake. An old woman at Masora said, 'When my son goes to watch the fields, I fill his belly with gruel: then he has to piss all night, and keeps awake to drive away the pigs'. It is not taboo to have sexual intercourse in a field; on the other hand, I do not think there is any idea that such a thing would assist the crops.

FIG. 3. Gagra used for cutting grass and brush-wood
Length 3' 9"

The chelik climbs up onto the platform by a bamboo pole similar to those used for the sago-palms. Sometimes he has a pulley of ropes to haul up food, water and firewood.

From the *tondi* there are often elaborate arrangements of strings, stretching right round the field—a jerk sets a number of clappers banging or scarecrows swinging.

The fields are also protected by magic methods. A gourd, broom and leaf-cup may be hung up together, or a jackal's head,[2] or a black pot decorated with white lines to avert ghosts hostile to fertility.

Permanent Cultivation

The Muria, as I have said, are not dependent on their axe-cultivation. Nearly all of them now have permanent fields, used mostly for rice. Yet even where, as in parts of Kondagaon, axe-cultivation has been largely abandoned,

[1] Another riddle about the *tondi*: 'There are elephant's bones in the middle of the field.'

[2] W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'Equally common is the use of the dried skull of cow or bullock. In Bastar such skulls have been described to me as *kharchadar*, the term being explained by ideas derived from Hinduism that because in some former incarnation a man had died without paying his debts, when reborn as a cow or a bullock, his small in this way was working off the old debt by such service after death.'

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241 they still make a small *parka* plot somewhere in their fields so that some of the grain will mature quickly and they will have enough to eat at home.

Their big fields are generally embanked, often irrigated with some ingenuity. They are distinguished according to the soil and location—*dhar neli* or *gabhār* is a low-lying rice-field, a *tikra* is a field on a slope, a *dobha* or *mal* is an ordinary level field—and they are often given names, the Cat-stone Field, the Field of the Frogs, the Field of the Ghost.[1]

FIG. 4. Yerk used in the same way as the gagra, but of a different pattern
Length 3' 10"

Perhaps the most treasured thing, and often actually the most profitable, in a Muria's agricultural life is the *bāri* or garden enclosure near his house. This is carefully fenced with a stockade or with bamboo wattle-work, and is manured and enriched with the sweepings of the house and the droppings of the cattle throughout the year.

Here the Muria sows the profitable oil-seeds, sarson, til or arsi; here he sets beans by the fence, and a broad patch of red *jira* spinach. Often he plants some castor trees, or a sago-palm, sometimes plantain and papaya. One specially guarded patch contains his tobacco supply for the year.

Once the seed is sown, the attention of chelik and motiari is largely diverted from the ghotul to the fields. Ghotul life is almost suspended, though the smaller children go and solemnly imitate the habits of their elders. Little fires twinkle in the fields and the sweet music of the flute comes through the darkness.

When the first grain appears on the shoots, the Gaita offers an egg to Tallur Muttai to ensure its safety.

During the season, in the permanent fields there is a lot to be done. The embankments must be constantly repaired. The sprouting rice must be puddled with a board dragged by bullocks. The girls must go to weed. The boys set fish-traps where the water escapes through the embankments. It is a time of danger and taboo: an act of adultery may blight the grain, a quarrel discourage its growth.

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Everybody goes to reap the crop. They use the ordinary iron sickle. Before thrashing, the bundles are piled up on wooden platforms, heaped into rough bins, sometimes just stacked in neat circles on the ground.

The first sheaf cut is tied to a tree overlooking the field or clearing.

252 The *hara* thrashing-floor is prepared by men, for in many villages it is taboo for women to do this, and so the men clear the ground in or near the field, plaster and cow-dung it. In the middle they place a pole (*mer-gutta*) to the top of which they often tie a sheaf (Plate X). If they are going to use oxen, they attach a pole to the *mer-gutta* and drive the animals round in the usual way. Often, however, the Muria thrash with their feet (Plate X). If there

[1] For an account of names of fields in India, see *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. I (1892), pp. 113 and 141.

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A Cultivation Song

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A song sung to accompany the Korak Dahiya Karsana illustrates the various processes of cultivation and life in the fields.

Warpendoy pendoy rāmo rāmo!	In the Wendpendoy jungle is the hill Ramo!
Korak pchchi wāykom sāngo.	We will come to cut the tree branches, *sāngo.*
Miya wāy wāy pchchtorom sāngo	Before you came we had cut the branches.
Korak hāh wāykom sāngo	We will come to spread the branches in the field.
Miya wāy wāy hāhtorom sāngo	Before you came we had spread the branches.
Hurri tāsi wāykom sāngo	We will come to set fire to it with straw.
Miya wāy wāy hurri tāstorom sāngo	Before you came we had set fire to it.
Lāting tata wāykom sāngo	We will come to bring the rake.
Miya wāy wāy lating tatorom sāngo	Before you came we had brought the rake.
Parka puhi wāykom sāngo	We will come to plough the *parka* clearing.
Miya wāy wāy puhtorom sāngo	Before you came we had ploughed the clearing.
Goräng witi wāykom sāngo	We will come to sow the mandia seed.
Miya wāy wāy wititom sāngo	Before you came we had brought the seed.
Hāmo witi wāykom sāngo	We will come to sow the *hāmo* seed.
Miya wāy wāy wititom sāngo	Before you came we had brought the seed.
Goräng kichi wāykom sāngo	We will come to pick the mandia crop.
Miya wāy wāy kichtorom sāngo	Before you came we had picked the crop.
Goräng jāhi wāykom sāngo	We will come to thrash the grain with a stick.
Miya wāy wāy jāhtorom sāngo	Before you came we had thrashed the grain.
Goräng hemi wāykom sāngo	We will come to sift the grain in a basket.
Miya wāy wāy hemtom sāngo	Before you came we had sifted the grain.
Goräng taddi wāykom sāngo	We will come to gather the mandia grain.
Miya wāy wāy taddihtom sāngo	Before you came we had gathered the grain.
Goräng widing wāykom sāngo	We will come to make a rope-bin for the grain.
Miya wāy wāy widihitom sāngo	Before you came we had stored the grain.

Plate VIII

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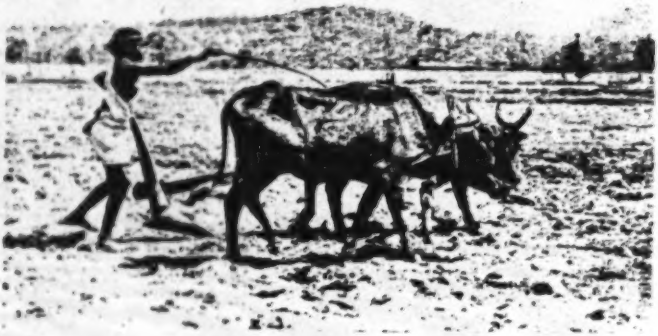

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[1] Motiari ploughing at Bayanar

[2] Carrying earth to embank a field

[3] Chelik at Sirpuri in solid-wheeled cart

[p. 30(B)]

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Dhusir jāki wāykom sāngo — We will come to press the grain into the bin.

Miya wāy wāy jākiorom sāngo. — Before you came we had pressed the grain.

III. The Muria's Year

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It is very difficult to give any sort of general time-table, for events vary in their incidence and in their order from place to place and from year to year. Everything depends on the orders of the Gaita and Siraha, and dreams, economic factors and 'inspirations' combine to disturb the course of events. However, the following table may be taken as giving a rough picture of a normal year:

January .. Bhimul Pandum, the festival of the rain-god. Pupul Korta Tindana and Pen Karsita, the New Eating Festival of pulses, also known as Jata Pandum. Chelik go from village to village dancing the Pus Kolang or Chherta. The people reap the til oil-seed.

February .. Kare Pandum, after which the people may cut grass, bamboos and may begin felling trees for their *dippa* and *parka* clearings. The chelik begin collecting wood and grass for the ghotul. The Marhai festivals, great semi-religious commercial fairs, begin now and continue in various places until April.

March .. Irpu Pandum, the festival of the mahua tree, Marka Pandum, the festival of the new mangoes, and Til Khani, the festival of oil-seed, are held about this time. The marriage season begins and continues until May. Boys and girls go out dancing the Chait and Mahua Dandar. The people are busy collecting mahua flowers, tendu leaves and wood.

April .. Wijja Pandum, the seed festival, preceded by a ceremonial hunt. Ceremonies to purify and protect the villages. People begin breaking myrabolams. Hot weather begins. Many marriages everywhere.

May .. Timber spread over *parka* clearings. Local ceremonies to ensure a good harvest and rainfall.

June .. Timber in clearings fired. Rains begin. Ploughing and sowing. Fencing of gardens and repairs to houses, thatching and protection against rain.

July .. Amawas or Hareli festival. Chelik make stilts.

August .. Heavy rain during the month. Tur Korta Tindana or Kurum Pandum, when the first millets are eaten.

September Rains are clearing. At the end of the month is the Korta Pandum, the first eating of the new rice, cucumbers and gourds. On the day after this festival, the chelik break their stilts and pile them on the stone of Dito or Bhimul Pen.

October .. Cheru or Nuka Nordana Pandum, before which the new rice must not be washed. The Dassera festival attracts thousands to Jagdalpur and Bara Dongar, and is celebrated in a few ghotul. Diwali comes a little later:

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the Muria do not illuminate their houses for it, but tie ears of grain in long strings over their doors. Road work begins, and everybody is busy reaping.

November.. A busy month in the fields. Since September the ghotul have been almost deserted by the chelik, who spend their time in little huts watching the crops. Reaping, threshing, winnowing and storing grain occupies everyone. From the end of October the motiari have been going out dancing the Diwali and, where this practice is unknown, boys and girls go together for the Hulki dances.

December.. In some villages the Jata Pandum is held in this month. People cut their sarson crops and store them. They collect myrabolams till the end of January.

IV. Cultivation and the Ghotul

883 At Padbera and a number of villages in the neighbourhood of Antagarh the ghotul has its own property. The villagers give the chelik a piece of
● 241 land for cultivation which is known as *chelik-parha*. The boys bring the wood from the neighbouring forest, spread it on the field, burn it and sow the seed. The girls see to the weeding and when the crop is ready all join in the harvest. The girls husk the rice in the ghotul itself and when it is ready give a feast to the village. The following day they offer an egg, red and black powder and liquor to the Kanyang and Rau of the field for the protection of the ghotul.

The chelik and motiari sometimes go to work as a ghotul. Should a party of visitors arrive from another village for a dance and there is no food or liquor for their entertainment, the boys approach one of the wealthier villagers (who of course may have several of his own children in the ghotul) and ask him to advance them rice and pulse, some liquor and a pig, promising they will go to work for him when he needs help in weeding his fields, gathering his harvest or mending a broken embankment. At other times villagers who are in urgent need of help employ the ghotul children and pay them with gifts of grain and pulse. I am told that money is rarely given. Sometimes the boys and girls only receive their food, though this food at least in the evening must be good and should include pork and liquor. When the children receive gifts of grain they save it up, storing it in the house of the leader, till there is enough for a big feast. This is prepared and eaten near the ghotul, or helps to augment the feast at the end of a dancing expedition. The parents are also invited; since the mothers may not go inside the ghotul, the feast is enjoyed outside.

V. The Muria's Food

Kare ahār ta pele pahār. If you get enough to eat you can push a mountain aside.—Muria proverb

883 In addition to work in the fields, chelik and motiari are kept busy all day long, in and around their homes. The motiari must fetch water from the well or stream, collect leaves from the jungle for leaf-cups and plates, nurse the babies, clean and cow-dung the buildings, husk rice and grain, help in the cooking, feed goats, pigs and cattle. The boys must fetch firewood from the forest, make string from hemp and bark, prepare the ploughs and carts, keep the buildings in repair, and look after the cattle and other animals.

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Chelik bringing wood for dahi cultivation

Plate IX

Muria firing a marhan clearing near Antagarh

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Chelik of Bayanar digging

Plate XII

The Maiya of Phanda spinning rope

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village, they give him a fowl and some rice in compensation. They offer some of this liquor to the village gods, the boys and girls dance from house to house, and they eat and drink in honour of the mahua tree.

In Palli-Barkot, and other villages of that neighbourhood, when the villagers first cut the rice crop, each householder thrashes a handful of grain in his hands and takes it to the ghotul. There the Gaita ties it up in a bundle with paddy string—to imitate the usual household grain-bin—and hangs it up in the roof. In the month of Magh, a little of this grain is taken out, husked on a stone, and offered to Thakur Deo for the protection of the village. There is a feast that night in the ghotul, and the whole village comes for it, only the married women sitting outside. Here they say that it is not the presence of Lingo that keeps the married women out of the ghotul, but the blessed rice-seed which might otherwise be ruined. Later, at the first fall of the rains, the Gaita distributes a little of the seed to every householder.

II. Ceremonial Axe-cultivation

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Everywhere the chelik are specially associated with the cutting of timber for *parka* or *dippa* cultivation. For *parka*, it will be remembered, wood is cut at a distance and brought and strewed over a field and then fired for manure. In *dippa* the trees and undergrowth are cut on the spot and fired there, and the seed is sown in the ashes. In Bandopal, in April 1941, and in Nayanar two days later I saw a ceremony that combined the cleaning of the village with the consecration of the first *parka* plot. At dawn the chelik assembled in the ghotul. The four leading boys carried large baskets and were unadorned; the rest were fantastically attired with turbans of old rope, fronds of broom-grass stuck in the hair, smeared with ash, and already hung about with old baskets, winnowing-fans and scraps of matting. When they were ready, the party set out waving long sticks in the air. They visited every house in the village, including those of non-Muria. Outside each house, the boys formed into a long line and began to push their sticks along the ground, digging it up a little and clearing the ash and leaves in one direction. When possible they dug up the neatly-plastered courtyards to the great annoyance of the house-wives. As they danced they sang,

Reka pindi kokko kokko.
Marka pindi kokko kokko.
Irpu pindi kokko kokko.

And so on with every sort of variation. The meaning of this was 'Break up and grind the char, mango, mahua' and then in the various changes—*Mao pindi* (grind the bison), *Dudo* (grind the breasts) or *Puda pindi* (grind the vagina). *Kokko* is said to represent the pounding and breaking of myrabolams against a stone; the elder dancers tapped their sticks on the ground 'as if they were breaking harra'.

While this demonstration was in progress before the house, the elder boys went inside with their baskets and were given mandia flour, mahua flowers, perhaps a copper coin. In some houses the people were far from friendly and threw dirty water and abuse at the boys. In every house where a motiari was living there was tremendous fun. The girls, some of whom ran round from house to house ahead of the boys, hid behind the door and when the boys approached jumped out with dirty water and threw it over them. In one house the two leaders were shut up inside with the Belosa and Dulosa,

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'as if they were bride and bridegroom' the others said. In another the boys shut the girls in, piling brushwood against the door. In two places the boys were able to steal chickens. One was a Muria chicken, and the owner let it go with a laugh; but the other was taken by way of revenge on a surly Hindu who abused the boys and gave them a stingy contribution of flour. They got the hen and hid it in a basket. The owner followed them round protesting, but he never found it.

From every house the boys took some old basket, broom, bit of matting, broken winnowing-fan, so that by the time they had done their round they looked an extraordinary collection of scarecrows. This, of course, was part of the clearing of the village of disease.

By now the boys had several baskets full of flour and mahua flowers. They took the mahua to the out-still where it was exchanged for liquor, and carried the flour and the two chickens out into the fields. Here they threw down in a corner of the Gaita's field all the rubbish they had collected and their dancing-sticks, and some of them gathered brushwood and a little timber and strewed it over a patch some five yards square.

Other boys brought water and large pipal leaves, and two of them mixed the flour and water and made thin cakes spreading the mixture on one pipal leaf and covering it with another. Then the Sirdar fired the first *parka* of the year with a bit of straw-rope brought from the ghotul fire.

After the wood and rubbish had blazed up, the boys threw three of the mandia-flour cakes into the ashes as an offering to the Kis Kanyang (Fire Maiden) and placed the others in the embers to cook. The Gaita offered the two chickens to the Earth. All looked eagerly to see how the bodies fell; if they fall on one side it is a good omen, if downward, bad. Today one omen was bad. The Gaita sat by the fire with chelik on either side, and offered liquor to the spirits of the dead Gaita of the village, praying, 'Give us good wind and no rain when we fire the *parka*; give us sound sleep in the ghotul with our motiari, and let them not conceive'.

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Then they all drank. The leaves were pulled out of the fire, the bread was distributed and little bits of roast chicken. I got one of the chickens' heads and a bit of bread. Now this was done, the villagers could cut and fire their *parka*. After the rains began, the Gaita would sow in this spot and after him the other villagers.

In Khutgaon and the villages of that area, this festival does not seem to be kept, but on the eve of the day that they decide to cut the wood for the *parka* or *dippa*, the Gaita sleeps in the ghotul to ensure that all are chaste. After the usual offerings in the village temples, he takes the people to the forest. As the chelik cut the wood they cry *Kiddari pude!* upon which the Gaita says to the other villagers who sit watching, 'Give them something to eat'. They have brought pots with burnt rice at the bottom, water and gourds. They chase the chelik, catch them, smear their faces with black soot from the pots and give them each a little burnt rice to eat. If there is any left it is taken to the ghotul and the motiari are similarly treated in the evening.

The *bohorani* ceremonies for the protection of the village must not ignore the ghotul, though theoretically such rites should not be necessary. At Chingnar, every three years the Gaita goes round the ghotul seven times, drives slag 'nails' into the threshold and buries a ring before it to keep off witchcraft. At Surma, they tie seven mokha leaves over the door with the same purpose.

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prisoners clearly suspected some trick and told me very little. On the whole I was impressed by the great sadness of their life, even though in the jail they are well and kindly treated. Most of them, I think, felt that an inexplicable tragedy had befallen them. They did not feel like criminals. Their lives had been destroyed by a capricious destiny.

It was naturally more difficult to get information about the suicides, for, in the nature of the case, the person of most interest could not be present to tell his story. Relatives also and the villagers were more reticent, I thought, in discussing this subject, possibly because they feared that any revelations might lead to further police investigation. But even so I was able to get a certain amount of information about the Maria's attitude to self-murder.

But enquiries among the Maria are never easy. The people say that, as a result of Mr Grigson's investigations when he was writing his book on the tribe, their villages have suffered an invasion of man-eating tigers. In one village where I myself took photographs it was declared afterwards that I had made all the women barren. The Maria are friendly people, and I was able to make many friends among them. But particularly on matters which have a police reference they are naturally inclined to be secretive and prefer to claim ignorance rather than by confiding in the investigator perhaps expose themselves to later difficulties. Moreover, there is undoubtedly throughout aboriginal India a belief that talking about tribal affairs may anger the ancestors of the clan or disturb some godling's peace of mind. It is said of Korava children, members of a criminal tribe in Mysore, that they are taught from infancy to say 'I do not know' in reply to questions put to them.[1] Many Maria adopt the same attitude.

The presence of my wife, whom everyone (incorrectly) regarded as a Maria but who has a Maria name, was of great assistance in removing suspicion, as was the fortunate chance that I always go barefoot in the villages. I learnt later that the Maria believe that one reason why the crops are so poor nowadays is that officials defile Mother Earth by trampling on her with their shoes. 'At first,' they said, 'when anyone

[1] L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer, *The Mysore Tribes and Castes* (Mysore, 1930), Vol. III, p. 612.

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crossed a field in shoes a tiger ate him, but now the god which possessed the tiger only ruins our crops.' Even though I made the human women barren, therefore, I did not injure the fertility of Mother Earth!

I do not suggest that in this book I have discovered anything new. But the transition from a social order where everything was settled by the tribe to a state of affairs where everything is settled by outsiders and nothing at all by the tribe, is of obvious interest. The tragedies described here throw light on many aspects of tribal life, and are specially valuable as indicating what things are emotionally disturbing to the Maria mind. When we read a monograph on a tribe, its whole life is laid out before us. Some things are interesting and exciting to the reader, but it is not always easy to discover what is interesting to the people themselves. Supplementary studies like this help us to appreciate the actual realities of, for example, a polygamous household or the real difficulties of the serving-marriage. The impact of witchcraft on the minds of the people, the extent of their attachment to property, their jealousy and desire for revenge are vividly illustrated here.

The value of such a study as this is not, however, only for the student. As the tribal areas are opened up, and as the aboriginals come more and more into touch with the outside world, it will become ever more essential for administrators and magistrates to understand tribal mentality. It is hard enough sometimes to understand any kind of aboriginal action. There is nothing more baffling than aboriginal crime. The Courts are all too ready to save time and energy by accepting a plea of drunkenness as an explanation of what seems incomprehensible. Undoubtedly a proportion of aboriginal crime, like the crime of civilized people, is due to alcohol. But I do not believe the proportion is large and there is reason to suppose that the plea of drunkenness so frequently put forward is often suggested to the accused by his advisers.

The importance of anthropological knowledge for the proper evaluation of aboriginal crime hardly needs illustration. One of the most difficult things that a Court has to decide in a case of homicide is whether the deed that it is evaluating comes under any of the Exceptions to Section 300 of the

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substantial and carefully tended buildings. Fowls, set in funnel-shaped bamboo stands, share the house with the human beings.

II

The Maria's main source of livelihood is agriculture. The ancient and traditional method is axe-cultivation, whereby the people make clearings in the forest with their axes, allow the felled wood to dry, fire it shortly before the rains and then sow the seed in the ashes. Sometimes this is done in the very place where the trees are cut. Sometimes brushwood is carried to a regular field and spread upon its surface. The Maria, living as they do in settled and often level country, have also many permanent fields which are embanked and irrigated by artificial tanks. The Maria are very proud of these tanks, and they are a frequent cause of dispute which sometimes leads to murder. A great part of the Maria's life is necessarily spent in these fields and clearings, and little field-huts and platforms are erected in which whole families camp for weeks at a time watching the crops at night and cooking and doing their work by day. Everybody helps in the work. Beside the family there may be farm-hands, some of a special kind such as the Lamhada, who serves for his wife instead of paying the bride-price, and the Kabari who is a bond-servant working to repay a loan.[1]

Besides agriculture, the Maria eagerly and successfully exploit the produce of the great forests in which they live. There is nothing edible that they will not eat, fruits, roots, tubers, leaves—they have a profound knowledge of the possibilities of natural produce. They are equally omnivorous in their attitude to meat. In the villages they keep pigs, goats and fowls, and they are fond of pigeons. They still (though they often deny it to outsiders) eat beef on all important and ceremonial occasions. Rats, squirrels and small birds are caught by the children and roasted and eaten with delight.

[1] The Kabari system, which is similar to what is called Bhagela in Hyderabad, Kamiauti in Bihar, and Gothi in Orissa and Madras, is open to grave abuses—men working a whole life-time to settle a debt which is not settled even by death, but descends to the sons—and is now controlled by the State.

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Girls threshing grain with their feet at Mokhpal

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conjuror that if he washed his wife in the blood of a boy, his next infant would be healthy. To ensure this result a child was murdered. A similar case occurred in Muzaffarnagar, where a child was killed and the blood drunk by a barren woman'. Later, in the same locality, 'a childless Jat woman was told that she would attain her desire if she bathed in water mixed with the blood of a Brahman child. A Hindu coolie at Mauritius bathed in and drank the blood of a girl, thinking that thereby he would be gifted with supernatural powers'.[1] More recently three cases of the murder of children in order to obtain offspring occurred in the Punjab in 1921, and in one of these a barren woman bathed in the child's blood.

In a small village in Chanda District in 1935, a Maria and a Marar planned to sacrifice a boy or girl at the Holi festival to improve the crops. The other villagers objected, but on the night of the festival, as the Holi fire was dying down, they forced an elderly Marar to stand before the fire, stripped him naked and threw him into the flames. In the following year a little Kurmi girl was killed by two women on behalf of the priest of a Mahadeo temple on the bank of the Narbada River in Hoshangabad District. They cut out a little of the left lobe of the liver while the child was still alive—the liver was needed for the treatment of a merchant.

In the *Katha Sarit Sagara* of Somadeva a pregnant queen asked her husband to gratify her craving by making a tank full of blood for her to bathe in. In order to avoid taking human life, he had a tank filled with the juice of lac, and the woman thinking it was blood, was satisfied. In the tale of Devasmita in the same collection a king is told by the Brahmins that, if he wished to have a large number of children, he must kill his son and offer up his flesh in the fire. When his wives smelt the smell of the sacrifice, each bore the king a son.[2]

Here blood is effective for the fertilization of the human body, but among the aboriginals (as in the Meriah sacrifice of the Khond) it is chiefly valued for its enrichment of the soil. This belief is probably still very widely held in Bastar and

[1] Crooke, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 172 f. See Halliday, *Folk-Lore*, Vol. XXXV (1924), p. 404.
[2] Penzer, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 98.

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674 782 image, and with a long sharp knife cut his throat until the head was completely severed from the body. This is the normal method of sacrificing a pig or chicken. The crime was discovered and the would-be Zamindar and two of his assistants were hanged.

The second case, which occurred among the Bison-horn Maria, I will describe immediately. The third example was in 1934 when a Muria of the north, who had not been getting good harvests, was accused of vowing to the goddess of his irrigation tank that, if the winter crops were good, he would offer her a child. That year he had unusually good crops, and in fulfilment of his vow he is said to have killed his nephew, an orphan boy of fourteen years, whom he had reared from infancy. The accused was sentenced to death by the Sessions Judge, but was acquitted by the Appellate Court, and the murder went undiscovered.

A very mysterious crime occurred in Jhoriabadhan in 1923. A little boy named Sukra about two-and-a-half years old disappeared and was never seen again. An elderly Maria of the village was accused of his murder, but was acquitted for lack of evidence. I have little doubt that this was a case of human sacrifice. It was proved in Court that about a month before the child's disappearance the accused told some friends while they were crossing over his embankment that he had promised to sacrifice a male child if the dam did not burst. He warned them that they should not allow their children to pass that way for fear they should fall in. At this stage he was probably thinking that the deity of the tank would herself push a child into the water. But later when this did not happen, he himself probably drowned the child.

IV

THE HUMAN SACRIFICE AT MARDUM

674 782 241 Kuhrami Guddi of Mardum near Katakalian had built a tank for irrigating his fields. Finding that he was not getting such good crops as he wanted, he plotted to find a pregnant woman[1] and sacrifice her to the spirits presiding over the

[1] Crimes against pregnant women are probably always motivated by superstition. Some extraordinary examples are found in *A Hangman's Diary*, edited by Albrecht Keller (London, 1928).
In 1577 at Bamberg (Germany) Nicklauss Stuller of Aydtsfeld was

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tank, Mirchuk Deo and the Yer Kanyang or Water Maiden.

On Wednesday, 20 April 1938, the usual ceremonies for the newly-born daughter of Guddi's nephew, Hirma, were being celebrated at Guddi's house. About midday a Mahara woman named Bote, who was four months pregnant, came to the house and joined the party. It was suggested later that Guddi had met the woman that morning while he had been engaged on repairs to the village Rest-house. She had been working there and when she left with her axe and crowbar, Guddi followed her and persuaded her to come home with him. Whether it happened just like this or not, it certainly seems probable that Guddi had already determined that Bote was to be his victim. He made her drink rice-beer and when the other visitors prepared to leave, persuaded her to stay on and take some food. The food (since, as a Mahara, Bote would not have eaten from the Maria's hands) was probably more rice-beer and it looks as though Guddi succeeded in making the woman more or less fuddled, for she stayed on in the house till evening and Guddi persuaded her not to go away by promising presents for her children.

Early in the evening Guddi left the house and found his brother Nari, who was joint owner with him of the tank, and his nephew Hirma sitting in a small open shed outside. He told them that he had decided to make a sacrifice of a foetal child, and that Bote was to provide it. It will be noted that the important part of the sacrifice was not the mother so much as the unborn child. Nari later claimed that he tried to dissuade Guddi from this plan, but Guddi, who was the head

drawn out on a sledge and his body was torn thrice with red-hot tongs before he was executed on the wheel. He and two associates had committed eight murders. First he shot a horse-soldier; secondly he cut open alive a pregnant woman in whom was a dead child; thirdly he cut open a pregnant woman in whom was a female child; fourthly he cut open a pregnant woman in whom were two male children. One of his associates said they had committed a great sin and that he would take the infants to a priest for baptism but the other associate, saying that he would act as priest and baptise them, took them by the legs and dashed them to the ground.

In 1580 at Nuremberg Hans Muller aged 60 was executed on the wheel for the murder of his sister who was pregnant. After the murder he "dealt lustfully" with her and buried the body in a field.

In 1601 at Nuremberg Bastian Grilbl, a thief, was executed. He confessed to twenty murders and among his victims were five pregnant women. These he had caused to live in debauchery with his companions, then cut them open and cut off the hands of the infants and made candles of the hands to be used in burglaries.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

one of the revellers got hungry and asked his mother for food. She told him to ask his wife, and his wife said she was too busy. The man picked up a hoe and killed his mother.[1] Sori Pandu of Mokhpal was notorious for the fits of rage to which he was subject when he was drunk. One day he went to play his sarangi-fiddle at a beer party. There was a drunken quarrel, and Pandu tried to kill his uncle with an axe, but the others intervened. So he went home and got out his bow and arrow and shot him.

Korki hoe

In most of these cases intoxication was the immediate cause of the murder. There does not seem to have been any long-standing enmity between the parties, and most of the incidents should really be regarded as tragic accidents. It is only occasionally that the Maria uses landa deliberately to free himself from his inhibitions. Poyami Panda had suspected his wife of intimacy with the village Siraha, Nanda, for months past, but he had not taken any serious action about it until on the night of a festival, after he had drunk a lot of landa, he caught Nanda and his wife together and, his inhibitions and fears of punishment having been removed by the alcohol he had taken, he killed his wife's seducer.

Toddy was responsible for only one homicide and that a very tragic one. Father and son were living together amicably. One evening the father tapped his toddy tree and brought home a gourdful of the juice. They drank it together. Over supper the son asked his father for a loan, and when the old man refused, the youth fell into a drunken

[1] Case No 72.